1. Rhomboid

FAITH'S CERTAINTIES

BY

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PREFACE

A PECULIAR and pathetic interest attaches to this volume of collected essays by " J.B."— to use his familiar signature, by which he will be affectionately remembered in every quarter of the globe. They include his latest writings, and the delicate thread of his life must have been almost at breaking-point when some of them were penned. Yet there is not the slightest trace of any failure of his marvellous powers. The intelligence is as clear and keen, the heart as warm and sensitive, the insight as sure and penetrating, as ever, while the sense of humour, the genial consciousness of the ironies of life, seems positively to grow more vivid as the writer feels himself coming close to the mystery and the revelation we call death. In spite of infirmities, " J.B." was joyous and fearless and full of hope to the end, because his confidence was strong in the Goodness that is the Soul of all things, in the Fatherhood that controls the lives and destinies of men. Nothing could daunt his faith, for he always saw so clearly how much there is to fortify belief in God. That is the underlying conviction and inspiration of this series of essays, which therefore fitly bears the title of " Faith's Certainties."

CONTENTS

Contents

FAITH'S CERTAINTIES

I

LIFE'S MARCHING ORDERS

THERE are people to-day who would dispute the suggestion conveyed in this title. "Before you talk of marching orders you must prove there is an orderer." We will leave that, then, for the moment, to come to what is indisputable. It is certain at least that we are marching. If we could imagine an observer placed at some point in the sky, and watching from there the course of human history, what would he have seen? The spectacle might be described in many ways. But there is one term that would fit it with utmost exactness. He would see a procession; a procession that never for one instant faltered or halted in its movements. Through all those thousands of years the march goes on. Through millenniums of barbarism, of savagery, through the rise of empires, civilisations, religions that are born and die, the line keeps step. All sorts of things happen; but one thing never happens—the army never halts. The foremost files drop off incessantly into the unseen. But its numbers are constantly recruited from behind. Death at one end, birth at the other. Here at least is a marching order; the order to move on. Every individual of the host hears it and obeys. We can dam up rivers and build ramparts against the sea.

But no force, visible or invisible, that we have yet discovered can stay the rush of time. We can measure it, calculate it, divide it into moments, years, centuries; what we can never do is to keep one moment back, hinder its ceaseless flow. When we have begun to live we have begun to march. Every experience we know—of utmost joy, of deepest pain, of weariness, of exultation, of disillusion—has this common element. Whatever the moments contain they will pass; as surely as they have begun they will end. Is there any other fact of life so tremendous, so bewildering as this? Carlyle puts the fact, and the bewilderment of it, in one haunting sentence: "We emerge from the inane; haste stormfully across the astonished earth; then plunge again into the inane. But whence? O heaven, whither? Sense knows not; Faith knows not; only that it is through Mystery to Mystery."

There is no doubt, then, about the march. But what as to its meaning? We have likened this procession to an army. But no army we ever heard of has gone without its orders. The movement of a great force on the war-path is a tremendous spectacle; one which the war correspondent, the modern historian, has often described. You see the roads choked with the advancing battalions; the glint of bayonets, the hovering scouts in front, the endless lines of baggage wagons behind. You hear the rumble of the guns, the sharp notes of signalling bugles. The air is thick with dust, with the smoke, perhaps, of burning homesteads. But that formidable tramp is an ordered one. Through a thousand channels, from aides-de-camp to generals of divisions, and down from them, through every grade, to the

corporal with his file, the one idea is being worked out—the idea in the single brain of the Moltke, of the Napoleon, who governs all. And well for the army that has a chief it can trust. Every private is then twice his own size; he is reduplicated by the sense of his leader. From him he has gained the habit of victory, and so has won the battle before it begins. And what marching orders some of these have been! Have we ever tried to imagine what passed in the minds of the officers, and through them into the minds of the humblest private when the word came from Wellington for the storming of a Badajoz, of a Ciudad Rodrigo? What they thought and felt, these English lads, sons of loving mothers, with life beating in their veins just as it does in ours; whose flesh, torn by shot or steel, would hurt just as ours would; what they thought and felt as they marched in the moonlight towards that deadly breach! Supposing we were summoned to that sort of business to-morrow! What stuff, after all, human nature is made of! When we think of what it has gone through, and gone through so cheerfully, so heroically, surely it is great stuff. One wonders whether any wandering planet of the heavens can, after all, show a better? But what we want to note here is that in these portentous scenes the thing that kept those men steady in the ranks, that sent them on over the dead bodies of their comrades to face steel and bomb in their turn, was the sense that they were under orders. They were there not to enjoy but to obey. These simple souls become heroes by one thing—by loyalty to their duty, to their trusted chief. And you will get nothing out of men, whether on the battle-field or any other field, without that; without a

chief you can believe in, and a sense of duty that is bound up with that faith.

Duty; there is a word, a marching order, indeed. Says Quinet, writing to a friend in what, to him, was a dark hour: "Do not talk to me of hope; it is too deceptive in its nature. It makes me ill. I like better duty, the fixed line, invariable, that one can follow with one's eyes shut without a mistake." Yes, but what is duty; where and how shall we find it? To the soldier with his chief there visible, and his orders before him, duty is a plain affair; not simple, heaven knows, to carry out, but simple enough to understand. But for us separate souls, cast in this twentieth century, with no visible commander before us, with a babble of confusing voices around us, with every imaginable theory of life offered for our choice; for us creatures of passion and of instinct, with the guides all at quarrel as to the ultimate questions, how shall we find out what our duty is? What is duty, and, above all, what are its credentials, its sanctions? We are minded specially to ask this question in view of a recent statement by an eminent publicist. Mr. William Archer, in an article which appeared recently in a daily paper, discusses the question of "Eternal Verities." "Eternal Verities" was a phrase he had copied, in order to criticise, from a book by Dr. H. B. Gray on "The Public Schools and the Empire." Dr. Gray's "Eternal Verities" are what he holds to be the religious truths offered us in the New Testament. We are not here holding a brief for Dr. Gray's views either of the Old or the New Testament. Our concern is with Mr. Archer's contention as to the relative merits of morality and religion. He asks:

"Is it quite wise, then, to rest the sanction of morality on any individual set of theological verities, seeing that morality has certainly existed before them, and apart from them, and would as certainly continue to exist if they proved to be no verities at all?" He adds: "Surely the truth is that in founding morality upon theology we are basing the more certain upon the less certain. The evidences of morality are in and around us at all times; the evidences of any particular religion are largely historical, and no historical fact can, in the nature of things, be as certain as a fact continually verified in actual experience. . . . The most ancient theological verities are imparted to the world—or rather to this or that portion of it—at this or that historic date. The moral verities are immeasurably prehistoric."

This is all very interesting, and, to us at least, very strange. Mr. Archer's indictment may be put into three propositions. First, morality is superior, as a guide, to religion, because it is older. Secondly, religion is inferior because it is historic. Third, morality is safer, because, in contrast with it, religion cannot, as can morality, be continually verified in experience. There is a fine, breezy assurance about these statements which is in itself attractive. But how far do they conform to the facts? Mr. Archer's historical researches may be very extensive. They are certainly more extensive than ours if they have enabled him to discover any existent morality, or dawn of morality, that is older than religion. All we know of the prehistoric comes from the hints suggested by the historic. And unless our reading has been on entirely wrong lines, the lesson it teaches

is that the earliest races of which history offers us any information, give us always religion as the basis of their morality. India, Assyria, Egypt, they are all alike in this. Says Boscawen : " Six thousand years ago man, in Egypt and Chaldea, stands before us, pure in his tastes, lofty in his ideals, and, above all, keenly conscious of the relationship which exists between himself and his God. It is no dread, but the grateful love of a child to his father, of friend to friend, that meets us in the oldest books of the world." And if, setting history aside, we look for the prehistoric conditions in what we find amongst the existent savage races, shall we find in any of them a morality which exists apart from and independent of religion ? If such there be we shall be glad to have news of them.

But the religions are inferior because they are all historical. They came into existence at such and such dates. Well, what would you have ? Is there anything in the visible universe, from the spiral of a nebula to spring's first cuckoo, that is not, in a way, historical, that has not its date assigned ? Is not morality historical ? And as to religion, how do we suppose, in nature's order of things, that the great religious personalities could appear before a time which was equal to producing them, and equal to receiving them ? The third of Mr. Archer's statements seems to us, in its value as an argument, equal to the other two. Morality is so superior, as a marching order, to religion, because it is continuously verifiable by experience. Well, we suppose experiences vary. But to some of us at least, it is precisely on the ground of an experience continuously verified that we hold to religion. It is precisely because we

have found nothing else that is equal to the strain of life and of temptation; nothing else that reaches where public opinion and outside maxims and dry counsels of prudence cannot reach, into the hidden region of motive, into the secret realm where duty fights its battle with desire—it is because of this experience, daily tested and verified, that we think so little of a morality that is not backed up by something behind a morality, something that gives morality its life and conquering power. The New Testament is the greatest book of morality, because it is the greatest book of religion. It gives us a supreme morality, because it gives us a supreme life. It supplies so perfectly what Seneca, in that strange yearning sentence of his, describes as the world's great want: "We ought to choose some good man, and always have him before our eyes, that we may live as if he watched us, and do everything as if he saw." Can we forget how exactly this answers to what Mill, that other seeker, says of Christ? Prosper Mérimée, Mill's contemporary in France, who called himself a great atheist, "an outrageous materialist," has a saying which might be put beside Mill's. Speaking of the New Testament, he observes: "It seems evident to me that there is no better rule of conduct to follow, whatever doubts one may entertain as to the origin of the book." The New Testament contains much that belongs to its own time, a time which is gone, and whose conditions have been outgrown. We strip off the peel to get to the orange. But beneath the temporal shines there the eternal. Here still seeking souls find their marching orders. Here find we life's highest, given us in its highest example. Here come we in contact with spiritual

forces, whose power we can test to-day, and whose action upon us is to translate the Christ life of those glorious passages into a Christ life written in ourselves. Here we get our morality, with a driving power that makes it effective. Here, too, we get what morality can never give, the enthusiasm for living which comes from an unquenchable hope.

Voltaire once described life as "*une mauvaise plaisanterie*" (a bad joke). It certainly will be that or worse, if we follow some of the marching orders which are current to-day. In youth's hot age we are apt to take our orders from the passions. The passions are magnificent in their way. Let none undervalue or disparage them. Milton, and after him Vauvenargues, has described them as factors of the noblest in us. But always when in their proper place. They are forces that must never be leaders. They are placed too low down in us to be watchtowers. Their range of vision is so limited, and of themselves they never see straight. Besides, they dry up later on, and yet life has still to be lived. People take orders from the oddest things. Of old people sought direction in omens, in signs and oracles, the flight of birds, the entrails of slain victims. A witty French lady writer, describing her recent experiences in England, informs her readers that amongst us young ladies, anxious for their matrimonial prospects, seek guidance as to their future husbands by mystical incantations, by weird rites at Michaelmas and New Year's Day, by chance openings of the Bible, and so on. It is news to us; but she, perhaps, knows her sex better than we do. There are others, and these chiefly women, who take their orders from the priest, the confessor. They

would save their poor little souls by losing them—the wrong way. They give up their own reason, their own will—the twin pillars of character—putting them under the heel of another's reason, another's will. As if the creation of character—the one object for which we are here in this world—were to be obtained by evisceration, by annihilation! The priest feasts on souls, on their emasculation, their absorption into himself, as the vulture feasts on carrion. When will men learn, when will priests learn, that the development of a free, nobly thinking, nobly willing self, is the greatest of all creations in this world, and that the man who works against that, who aims at its destruction, is the most murderous of all murderers? We are here to be free, yet with an ordered freedom, free in a spiritual universe, whose laws—plainly discernible to all who seek—it will be our delight to obey. *Deo parere libertas est.*

The marching orders of that spiritual world are often stern enough, as stern sometimes, and as seeming hopeless, as those for the Balaclava charge, or of a forlorn hope. In your loneliness, in your weakness, you wonder sometimes what you are here for. Life seems too cruel. Its burdens, its disappointments have been so crushing, its conditions so merciless. Well, what are you here for? Plainly, it was not simply for enjoying yourself, for getting all you would like. Were that the main object, things would have been differently arranged. You have not had provision made for all that. But have you observed what provision has been made, a provision that has been always there? It is the provision for doing your duty; the provision for willing well, for acting well; the provision for

character, for nobleness. There has never been one single moment, one single condition of your life in which all that has not been made possible for you. And the greater the stress the greater the chance.

Here, again, let us turn to our New Testament. We get a glimpse there of life's marching orders as they were interpreted by one of its chief characters. Have we grumblers, comfortably housed meanwhile, with families and friends, with incomes, with all our easy securities, ever tried to picture to ourselves the actual state of things which Paul describes as his daily condition? "In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen . . . in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness!" And this career winds up in the Roman prison, and then, if report speaks truly, as one of Nero's victims, going out as one of those human flambeaux set alight to illuminate his gardens. Plainly not much provision for the human comforts here! And yet the man was content and joyful. He was a soldier on the march, God's soldier, with God's orders in his mind, and God's comfort in his soul. And these are the marching orders for you and for me. They have been good enough for millions of souls, who have been happy in the possession of them; happy, not from fancy conjunctions of prosperous circumstances, but because they felt themselves to be here to become what God would have them be, and to accomplish what God would have them do.

II

THE NEW GENERATION

The parent is your true revolutionist. The family man—that quiet, easy, domesticated personage—is really a greater upheaver than a case of dynamite. To bring forth children is to invite the whirlwind. It is to invoke the strongest, the most fateful force we know. The oldest institutions, your Church and State, your hoary creeds, your settled code of ethics, are powerless against the cradle. You settle your constitution, you endow and establish your theology, and fancy you have arranged things for all time. And the tiny brain that yonder is making its first attempts at thought may upset them all. In the year 1760 there was in France a going concern in Church and State—kinghood, priesthood, feudalhood, serfhood—that had been established for centuries. About that time some children were coming into the world—a Mirabeau, a Robespierre, a Danton, a Vergniaud; and their advent was the finger of doom pointed at all that. There has been from the beginning a curious mistrust of the new generation. The grown-up people know themselves, and think they know their world. But what of their successors? Will they take the world as the others take it? Old Sir Thomas Browne, in the "Religio Medici," recoiled from the future. He had no pleasure in thinking of what men would be or do two

or three centuries hence. Before him Horace had put this still more strongly. The world would go from bad to worse :—

> Ætas parentum pejor avis tulit
> Nos nequiores, mox daturos
> Progeniem vitiosiorem.

(The age of our parents, worse than that of its ancestors, has borne us, worse still, who in our turn are to produce a progeny yet deeper in vice.)

The most epigrammatic bit of condensed pessimism this, surely, that literature has ever produced. Things were indeed pretty bad in the time of the Roman poet, and they got worse.

This question of the next generation, the question of how to deal with this unknown power, how to curb and train its energies, and to turn them to the best uses, was one that profoundly exercised the ancient world. And its thoughts here were by no means always pessimistic. The Greek brain was especially full of bold schemes. Our modern science of Eugenics is really a very ancient one. Plato, in his "Republic," has anticipated almost all that has been said. He proposes to breed men as we breed horses—on scientific principles. It is to be by a principle of selection. In his ideal community he fixes the age at which men and women are to produce children. Women are to begin to bear children at twenty, and to continue till forty; men to begin as fathers at twenty-five, and to continue till fifty-five. It is throughout a State affair. And the education of the children is also a State affair. The whole training and preparation for life is laid down in rigid rules, framed in the interests of the community. That idea has been floating before the world ever since. But it

has never been carried out. The Emperor Gallienus, under the influence of Plotinus, proposed once to rebuild a Campanian city, call it Platonopolis, and to have it administered on the principles of the "Republic." It would have been a vastly interesting experiment for the world had the scheme matured, which it did not. Humanity is a very queer material, and has shown, so far, a decided objection to be cut and carved as though it were a piece of mahogany. Spite of all the schemes, it has gone on in its own weird way, falling in love, marrying, or doing without marrying, producing children, the results of passion, of affection, of wild impulse, and then standing by, wondering, admiring, or aghast at the new creation, and asking, often in sore bewilderment, what is to be done with it!

So, after all these ages, we have the question still before us, still an unsettled question, what to do with the new generation. We are, on a multitude of its issues, very much at sea; but there are one or two simple and yet fundamental matters on which there is, amongst thinking men, a general agreement. The difficulty is that, so far, the agreement is only a mental one; and the thinkers will have to be a good deal more energetic than they have been if these fundamentals are ever to be made a basis of action. We are, let us hope, at one with Plato that the State, as such, has an interest in the question; an interest which must govern much of its future procedure. It is, for instance, imperative to its well-being that its children should be born and brought up in healthy conditions. But what a proposition that is! With over seventy per cent. of its newcomers born here in England in big towns, where the air, our greatest

food, is often fifty per cent. under the health line; born in homes where neither good food nor good clothing is possible on the wages earned; born often in slums where the moral air and light are as dense and befogged as the physical! The question here is not of giving men luxuries, but of giving them bodies, brains and hearts. It is not a question of poverty even. Some of the best have been born poor. Luther was of peasant origin. "I am a peasant's son," said he; "my father, grandfather and ancestors were peasants." But it was a peasantry of good air and wholesome surroundings. Do we expect a slum ever to produce a prophet, a Luther? Are we not, in our present conditions in England, behind the barbarian races, who, at least, breed strong men? Thucydides said of Attica that it was famous for breeding men. So far, it has been about the last thing we have thought of.

The State has to wake up on this subject. Well for it if its politics shape more definitely and with more concentration upon it. It can do great things. But it can never of itself solve, or half solve, the problem. The biggest half is left for us, the individuals, who separately compose it. Not that we can go all the way, or even very far, towards its solution. The problem of heredity is a baffling one, beyond all our science and all our experience. Parents stand often amazed at their children. We see family after family that bear apparently no resemblance to their begetters. All the characteristics of their elders absent, and these strange new ones in possession! Germanicus has a Caligula for his heir; John Howard's son is a rake. For all that there are lines of movement, waymarks which these cross traces do

not obliterate. Blood tells; and so still more does training. A Spurgeon, a Wesley, do not come by chance; no, nor a Kaiser Wilhelm nor a Bach. You go back for a generation, or two generations, and see them in the making. Above all, you go back upon their mothers. Woman is to-day trying to get a fresh footing in the world. She is agitating for the vote, and doubtless in due time she will get it. Odd though, that having done comfortably without it for all these thousands of years she should want to pull the world about our ears if she does not secure it within six months. Let us hope, when it does come, it may help in the human struggle; but assuredly woman's best power does not lie there. Some of us who have votes care marvellously little for them. We know better where our true strength lies. Ballot-boxes are something, but the influence behind which fills ballot-boxes is something more.

Woman, if she will see it, has had, and may have still more, an influence that will fill not only ballot boxes, but all the great spheres of life, and that with the finest forms of power. It is with her, for one thing, to preserve religion for the future; to preserve it by making it beautiful and by making it lovable. The creeds are man's affair, and they are hardly a compliment to him. They have done so much to make religion forbidding, to make it ugly. It is not in them that men have reached their faith. They got it better at their mother's knee. To understand Wesley, you have first to understand his mother. Bernard's life is written first of all in the life of Aletta. Augustine derives from Monica. Nothing in modern literature is more beautiful than Lamartine's account of his mother.

He tells how in the garden of their country house there was a walk sacred to her, where, at a given hour every evening, she walked, in rapt communion with her God, and getting from that fellowship a light, a love, a devotion which made her to him and all who knew her an incarnation of all that was beautiful and holy. What a new generation should we have if behind it stood mothers of that type!

We are trying to-day to educate our new generation. And what is education? Assuredly not the mere stuffing of young brains with the rules of syntax or the names of dead kings. It is nothing if it is not, as far as that can be done, the creation of character. Says old Heraclitus: ἦθος ἀνθρώπῳ δαίμων (Character is man's destiny)—a true word. And character can only be created in others by the exhibition of it in ourselves. You can only teach religion by being religious; and by being so in a beautiful way. The only way of making creed effective is by acting it. Make young people fall in love with their teacher; that is the surest way of making them love the things he teaches. And that is true whether the teacher be a mother at home, or the leader of a class in day or Sunday school, or the professor at a University. What were the Rugby, the Uppingham school-books compared with the personality of an Arnold, a Thring? What were the Balliol traditions compared with the influence of a Jowett? What a story is that of Da Feltre of Mantua in the fifteenth century! Villari says of him: "His success in so immoral an age was entirely owing to the nobility and generosity of his mind. . . . For a long time his pupils were distinguished by a loyalty of character in strong

contrast with the general corruption." He believed evidently in Joubert's maxim: "Make truth lovely and do not try to arm her; mankind will then be far less inclined to contend with her."

One of the greatest problems of education is the problem of work. A fondness for work, the habit of it, the discipline of the mind to the encounter of difficulties, to perseverance in the attack till the victory has been gained; this is one of the fundamentals of character, the sign manual of a superior race. To get that into a pupil is the teacher's greatest and most difficult task. Montesquieu speaks of a traveller who found as the result of his observations that among all the tribes of men there seemed a general disposition to laziness. It is a disposition that has not died out. The new generation in particular is strongly suspected of laziness. Dean Farrar, as an old schoolmaster, gives an appalling account of our public schools. Of the twenty-five per cent. of the boys—supposedly the *élite*—who go to the university he says: "A considerable number leave school ignorant of history, ancient and modern, ignorant of geography and chronology, ignorant of every single modern language, ignorant of their own language, and often of its mere spelling; ignorant of every single science . . . profoundly ignorant of that Greek and Latin to which long ineffectual years of their aimless teaching have been professedly devoted." We do not know how far this holds of to-day. The fact remains, however, that English ignorance is still a proverb in better educated countries; and this further fatal fact that industry is considered bad form in the youth of our upper classes; that a proficiency in games counts

vastly more with them than a proficiency in language or in science. Are things better lower down? How is it that the English clerk, so unlike the German, knows no language but his own; that the working man spends so many hours and so much money at football, and nothing of one or the other over books?

How is this to be met; how is the new generation to be taught the value of work, to be infected with the love of it? There have been, at one time and another, odd theories abroad on this subject. Our English Locke, who in this was followed by Rousseau, and later by Basedow, has the brilliant idea of confounding for the child the difference between play and work. Make a child, suggests Locke, whip his top till he is tired and sick of it, and then give him some real work as a recreation! It is like the story of the builder saying to his labourers: "Let us now have a game at digging out the cellars!" The theory has been quite elaborated in some modern systems. We have no belief in it. It is a dishonesty, and one which in the end will be found out. There is all the difference in the world between play and work, and it is a crime against the young mind to conceal the fact.

At the other extreme are people who preach the austere doctrine of work for work's sake; who would banish the system of prizes, of rewards, as encouraging the spirit of emulation, as an appeal to an inferior motive. Say they: "Make work its own reward; create in the learner the love of the great literatures, of the great sciences, for what they contain in themselves." The other way, that of examinations, prizes, and so forth, results in a mere

cramming, which is cast aside and forgotten as soon as this immediate end has been attained. We hear of some Council school authorities who have been following this advice, though with another motive. They have abolished the system of prizes in the schools as a useless cost to the ratepayer! The scholars are henceforth to nourish their ardour on the text, "Virtue is its own reward"! Surely this is playing it rather low down on the young generation! It is expecting too much of the average human nature, especially of young human nature. It is to forget one chief thing here. The love of knowledge for its own sake is one of the mind's later achievements. Moreover, it is one that comes to us when the hard beginnings are over; when we have already penetrated the first barriers and got into the thing itself. You may enjoy the Greek dramatists for themselves when you can read them with your feet on the fender. That is a different one from conjugating the verbs in "mi"! The intellectual *élite*, the true students, come surely to the disinterested love of the thing they study; but none of us begins there. The boy has not the stimulant of the man.

But the man himself, at his best and highest, does he do entirely without his reward? Does the statesman, the scientist, the preacher, work with no thought of the guerdon? If he is of the true metal he will keep raising his price; working for ever nobler ends, for the reward which is spiritual. But he is helped every day by the other; by recognition, by the approbation of the worthy. The Greeks, who knew something of education, frankly accepted the reward system. The Olympian games, with their prizes, garlands, statues, were their great incitement

to the athletic training of their young men. And not for athletics alone. It was to Olympia the poets, the dramatists, brought their highest intellectual achievements for the verdict of the people. We read how Herodotus, "the father of history," wrote his history of the war with Persia to be recited at the games. We read how, as he read to the assembled thousands, the story of Thermopylæ, of Marathon and Salamis, the multitude, moved to its inmost soul, rent the air with their applause, and then crowned and magnificently rewarded the narrator.

We need to get our new generation to work. And we must set it to work with a good heart. Let the boy have his prizes. It is one of the purest joys in many a humble home when the lad, the girl, bring home the treasured volumes in their gay bindings to adorn the little bookshelf; there to be, not their own only, but their father's, their mother's pride. They will have bigger tasks later on, and win, let us hope, bigger victories. But they cannot learn, too soon, the habit of struggle, the habit of victory.

On the whole, we believe in the new generation. The faith by which we live is a faith in God; and that must have, as its corollary, a faith in man. And such faith, all seeming appearances to the contrary, is justified by the steady march of human progress. The world shows that it is not going to lose any of the good that has come into it. It may change the form and aspect of it, but it will keep the thing. The laws of the soul have all a forward, upward look. We believe with the Anabaptist Hübmaier, who perished for his faith: "Truth is immortal; and though she for a long time may be imprisoned, scourged, crowned with thorns, crucified

and buried, she will yet rise victorious on the third day." Because we are in higher hands than our own, in the hands of One whose pauses are preparations for great things, who wills our final participation in His own perfectness, we hail the future with gladness and hope. In that spirit, too, we hail the beginners—now in their cradles—of the new future. We say with Wordsworth :—

> A child more than all other gifts
> That earth can offer to declining man
> Brings hope with it, and forward looking thoughts.

III

THE GREAT FINDINGS

MAN is the eternal seeker. Life might be defined as a perpetual quest. We are always in search of something ; and the more we find, the more ardently do we seek. We begin early. Hide-and-seek is the children's greatest game. There is nothing so delightful to young people as a secret, except that perhaps of finding one out. It is this feeling for secrets and for unravelling them that makes the enormous vogue of detective stories. The prospector in the wilds of Alaska, in the Californian sierras, turning up the soil in the hunt for gold, is the image of us all. The world is, for every man in it, a Tom Tiddler's ground, which he scratches and rakes for hid treasure. And what extraordinary finds there have been ! Some of them of such pure luck. Was there ever anything queerer in this line than the discovery of glass ? We wonder now how the world could ever have got on without glass. How did we get it ? Not by chemical research, not by elaborate scientific experiment, but by the sheer blundering fortune of certain wandering sailors. Some Phœnician mariners, landing on the north coast of Africa, find themselves in the midst of a sandy desert. They search for stones on which to place their kettles and pans for cooking. Finding none, they bethink them of some lumps of saltpetre which form part of their cargo. They bring these along, make a fire

on them, and cook and eat their simple meal. And then the wonder! They find the saltpetre melted by the fire, has become mixed with the ashes and the glowing sand. As the liquid mass cools, it becomes before their eyes a clear, hard, transparent substance. Man has discovered glass!

That is a happening of once in a million years. We rarely get our finds so easily as that. It is not nature's habit to give something for nothing. What seem accidental finds are only a small part accidental. Mme. Curie struck radium when looking for something else; but an untrained mind would not have struck it at all. Newton reached gravitation from the fall of an apple; Watt hit on steam as a propelling force from the simmering of a tea-kettle. But apples had been falling from trees, and kettles had been simmering over kitchen fires long ages before, and nobody had extracted from them either gravitation or steam engines. Nature's secrets are, as a rule, hardly won; she demands the best and strongest in us before she will yield them. To-day Mont Blanc is an affair of excursion parties; but it took the trained muscle, the mountaineering instinct, the quenchless valour of a Balmat to find the road. We sit down at our tables, and partake of every eatable variety. Has it ever occurred to us to think of the sufferings, the deaths innumerable, of those human pioneers who first found out what was good to eat and drink; so often by eating and drinking the wrong things and getting poisoned by them? There ought to be a monument to the man who swallowed the first oyster. We all honour Columbus; but what of the man who, fashioning some queer craft, trusted himself first to the remorseless sea? We

are all on wheels to-day; the wheel is a bigger element in life than anything that all the parliaments have ever enacted. But who invented the wheel? And who kindled the first fire?

These were findings in the business of living; and, as someone has said, we must live before we can live well. There are doubtless wonderful things yet to be discovered in this direction. There are perhaps new sauces to be invented, and better soaps. We may learn to travel fifty times faster than we do now. And we may find out how to live to a hundred and fifty; to become taller and stronger. One doubts, however, whether improvements, however vast, in this line of things will add much to the sum of real living. Of what use after all, to go quicker on land or through the air if our traveller is miserable, or a fool, or a knave, both when he starts and when he gets there? Of what ultimate value is the swiftest flashing of news from the ends of the earth if the news is that of greedy schemes, of base intrigues, of human littleness, crimes and follies? The great finds, after all, lie elsewhere. They are the soul's finds. And we must each make them for ourselves. The question for you and me is, What have *we* found or what are we on the way to find? We were all set going, years ago, on the to us untrodden tract so vast and varied, so full of dangers and yet of glorious possibilities—that great country of free-will, where we were turned adrift to seek a character! How have we fared? Have we found anything worth picking up, worth talking about? The chapter of our separate experience, if it could only be accurately and honestly told, what reading would be more fascinating than this?

As we count over our findings, one thing is remarkable. It is astonishing how few of them—we are speaking here of ourselves, of the modern man and woman—could be fitted into the phraseology of the old theological creeds! To do that would be to drop out of reality into convention. We should miss the actual flavour of life as we have lived it. So much there has been in us that is not in them; so much in them that is not in us! To take one or two of the great finds. And these shall not be abnormal, belonging just to an individual and to no one else; but such as are open to us all, examples and lessons dug out of the great laws of life. Have we lived long enough to find this out, for instance, that happiness lies not in possession, but in work and the rewards of work? Do you suppose that a rich man is made happy by his mere riches? Nature has made no such contract with us; has never kept any such contract, as every rich man knows. A man who has waked up every morning for years to the knowledge that he is worth half a million, does not get any leap of morning joy from that knowledge. Not a whit. It is to him an entirely stale thought. If he lost it all, he would feel that, and badly. But that is another affair. The mere having, and the sense of having, is a pleasure he exhausted before he can even remember. It gives him no more emotion than eating his breakfast. If he is bent on money as his life pursuit, the enjoyment is not in having, but in making it; in seeing the pile increase. But that is an activity; not the static of the pile itself. To have your brain, your work, your business in this world; what matters it whether their operations be carried on in a big room or a small one; in a palace or a

cottage! Your soul is of the same size wherever it is; its dimensions, its activities, its triumphs and defeats have little or nothing to do with those outside fittings and furnishings. The New Testament, in its estimate of mere worldly possessions, is not talking mere conventional theology. It is transcribing a page out of the law of life. The old Greeks had found that law. We like the story of Euripides and his audience. In one of his plays he made one of his characters say: "Riches are the sovereign good; it is right they should excite the admiration of men and of gods." The audience, we read, was revolted, and would have stopped the play had not the poet announced that, in the end, the advocates of riches would be punished!

And connected with this find—of what work means to life—is another, which we cannot come upon too early; and that is the value to us of difficulty. We shall be good for nothing unless we set ourselves in contact with difficult things, things which bring out all our forces, all our reserves. If you have none in your own line of things, for God's sake seek them, and seek them every day. The man who has none in his daily programme is a lost man. His manhood can be seen ebbing out of him. All greatness is built on difficulty, daily encountered, daily conquered. Or even if not conquered, even if we are beaten, the value of the struggle remains. Failure is a magnificent hunting ground. If only it has taught us our limitations, that is something well learned. But so often it shows us, as with the flash of a searchlight, where our mistake lay, and how, after, to avoid it. The great men, we say, are all built on difficulties. When you see a great musician, a great painter, a great

scientist, you see there a soul that has wrestled with ease and indolence, and has thrown them ; that has gone daily for the hard things, and would have speech with nothing easier than that ; one who has wedded his will to his hours, and made them yield their utmost.

We should think more hopefully of England's future if we could see our Englishmen of to-day more in love with difficult things. Our workmen, so called, are getting more and more leisure, but what are they doing with it ? Who of them, for instance, ever dreams of turning his free hours, as the German so constantly does, to the tackling of a foreign language ? If he would only try it he would find a good foreign grammar the most interesting book in the world. For one thing—and just think of that—*it is all true.* It will never grow out of date for you, and will never deceive you. Come to it when and where you will, and it has always the right, the accurate thing to say on the point you are seeking. Of how many books, ancient and modern, can you say as much ? And as you grapple with your difficulty—in languages or any other research—you discover how all your nature joins joyfully in. What puzzled you yesterday comes easier to-day. How is that ? Because the unconscious part of you, the forces that lie beneath your active will and consciousness, have come to your aid and have been working for you. They approve what you are doing and set their seal upon the work. And if even in the end you are not a success you are at least a tryer, and that is a success in itself.

Intimately linked with that great find is this other ; that as a tryer you find yourself. You find not only work, but *your* work ; your message to

and business in this world. We are all preachers—of something or other; all of us are speakers, in public or in private; and some of us are writers. And we have all our style. How did we get it? There are innumerable books on style, which some of us have labouriously perused. We have, if we are ambitious, studied Quintilian and Aristotle; we have sought the secrets of Cicero's flow, of the compression of Tacitus; we know our Addison, our Burke, our Macaulay; we have sought the phrasing, the epigrammatic sparkle, of France, from Bossuet to Renan. You may do this and make a pretty jumble of it in the end. It has its uses, all that, for no honest work is useless. But it will be all a wandering in the wilderness unless, by God's mercy, this happens—that ultimately you find yourself. Find, that is, your own soul and its meaning for this world and its message to it. When you have got your message you have got your style. For, as Buffon has it, and it is the final word here, "*Le style, c'est l'homme même*" (style is the man himself). When you have, not to say something, but something to say; when God's word *to* you has become a word *in* you, a word that burns to be uttered, there is no more trouble about style. It will come out of you, just as your breath comes out of you, as an emanation of your very self. And men will taste it and savour it; for it is no longer the chopped straw of dead material, but a bit of actual life. When a man has found himself his fellows speedily find him. For a part of the universe has taken root in him and is expressing itself through him. It has entered into him as deep conviction, as passionate enthusiasm. Here is a ray of the eternal light, reflected through the

medium of this one soul, whose separate angle of reflection returns this unique ray, needed to make the human vision of God complete. And this message, remember, is not that only of the professional speaker or writer. You may never stand on platform, or say a word in print. Not the less you have your message, if you will seek it ; the gesture of your own spirit, seen in the temper of your mind, in your whole attitude to life—a beautiful, a significant message, if only we will seek it and find it.

Assuredly everything in life hangs upon the same string. What we have said as to these great findings forms part of this other, the greatest find of all—to have discovered and to have appropriated life's spiritual values. We are reminded here of an extraordinary saying of Lamennais, a saying assuredly out of his dark hours, of which he had many. "Do you know," he writes, "what it is which makes man the most suffering of all creatures? It is that he has one foot in the finite and the other in the infinite, and that he is torn asunder not by four horses, as in the horrible old times, but between two worlds." The sombre magnificence of the utterance does not hide from us its essential falsity. There are the two worlds assuredly ; but why miserable in their midst, why torn asunder ? We are made not to be torn, but to be at home in both, and to find in this double possession the unspeakable richness of existence. For it is precisely the fulness of the spiritual realm that gives us ease and happiness amid all the denials of the external.

To be perfectly at home in this world we need, as chief condition, to have found a home in the other. It is to carry your outfit within you ; an outfit which,

wherever you are, finds for you roof, walls and inner furniture. There are, it is true, people better born in this respect than others; born with the priceless gift of temperament. One thinks here of De Quincey's description of Goldsmith: "He had a constitutional gaiety of heart, an elastic hilarity, and as he expresses it, 'a knack of hoping,' a knack which could not be bought with Ormus and with Ind, nor hired for a day with the peacock throne of Delhi." Others have found things not so easy. "With a great price" have they won this freedom. But they have won it. They have found content by finding God. That was how the great Apostle found it. Was there ever a finer text to live upon than this word of his: "For I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content." Heavens, what states this man had been in! But he walks the world as a free, joyous man, free and joyous because he had penetrated to its centre and found God there! That is a find if you like. And the story of it, the human story! When you have had your fill of literature, is there anything, after all, so moving, so fascinating as the history of spiritual men; the story of how they found God; of how they found their home in the unseen? And it is there, at the core of every literature. The world-story is full of it; it is the Bible of humanity. Not in the Judæan books only, but before them in the Vedas, the Ramayana of India, the Egyptian Book of the Dead, the inscriptions of Assyria and Babylonia, the Avesta of Persia. It is the same story that we find—with new notes added—in psalm and prophet; in the New Testament, and through all the Christian ages. Let us say with Fichte: "An

insight into the absolute unity of human existence with the Divine is certainly the profoundest knowledge that man can attain." And that blissful insight has been granted to men in every age and country of the world. Do not imagine we Westerns have had the monopoly of it. The East has shared it with us; has had it before us. The unity of the race has been, in fact, its unity in the knowledge of God. We are one with each other in being one with Him.

That, we say, is the greatest of finds. It is the hid treasure lying beneath the world's rocky soil. For discovering it, here is a good prescription, again from Fichte, the bravest and devoutest of spiritual prospectors: "If a man is to find a witness for the soul, immortality and God at all, he must find it in himself, and in the spiritual history of his fellows. He must, in freedom, venture the belief in these things, and find their corroboration in the contribution which they make to the solution of the mystery of life. One must venture to win them. If it were not so they would not be objects of faith." And with a furniture like that inside you, you can afford to be a merry soul. Does the outside loom in clouds and darkness? You can use this prescription for the dealing with clouds:

The inner side of every cloud
Is bright and shining;
So therefore turn your clouds about,
And always wear them inside out
To show the lining.

IV

LIFE'S LOOSE ENDS

Benjamin Constant relates that he met once with a Piedmontese who gave him his confession of faith. He believed that the world was made by a God who had died before his work was completed. Only in this way could he account for the bewildering contradictions which he found everywhere; on the one side the evident marks of law, order and beneficent design; on the other hand, the confusions, the evils, the ragged edges of things. Everywhere an aim at perfection which had stopped short, a purpose uncompleted, if not frustrated. So our Piedmontese; who certainly, amid the medley of cosmic theories with which philosophy has presented us, has the merit of offering one as quaint as it is original. His solution is the last we should think of accepting, but he unquestionably had an eye for certain aspects of things which call for a solution. He was certainly right in regarding the world as an unfinished one. The architect's plan, whatever it is, has not been carried to completion. One might rather say that everything seems in a state of experimentation, as of an intelligence groping its way amid difficulties, trying this plan and that, with varying success. All nature's handiworks show this singularity. The vegetable world is full of it. The flowers are inventors, with hits more or less happy.

Some plants, such as the mistletoe, juniper, and mountain ash, have made the birds their seed carriers. Others, such as the lucerne, have invented the Archimedean screw, before Archimedes, and tried to apply it in flying. The plants go from simple means to more complex ones. The human body seems also a series of experiments. Oculists talk of the eye's defects, despite the wonders of its construction.

Man himself seems a movement towards something greater. He is that individually and also socially. In this last aspect we may accept Tyrrell's striking word : " The whole world is in labour. Man is feeling after something living that is coming to birth through a series of uncouth embryonic developments." We can never conceive of this as a perfect world—with all the evils that are in it. The old theology accounted for this by its doctrine of a Fall and of original sin. But that was really a Platonic rather than a Christian doctrine. You will find it nowhere in the teaching of Christ. And at best, it only removed the difficulty one step farther back. It left us with the question, " Why a Fall, and why evil as part of the creative scheme ? " Indeed, some of the theological expedients here have been about as effective for their purpose as the effort of the Psyllic tribe, of whom we read that they made a warlike expedition against the south wind, which had brought famine upon them, and who perished in the desert.

We are to-day reversing those verdicts. We have nothing to do with the hypothesis of a dead God, or of a defeated one. We see mind and will behind phenomena ; a mind and will that are alive and

active. But it is a mind and will that, by an eternal Kenosis, stooping from its own height, is incarnate in us and in the world; lowering its intelligence to bring it into touch with ours, making the world by our means, and so achieving its largest ends—that of making ourselves. That is why we have a world of experiment—because experiment is so good for us. Instead of a perfect world, where the creature would have nothing to do but to look on—at best a tiresome and enervating business—we have one which at every point calls us to action, and by so doing creates our faculties; creates our courage, our initiative, our endurance, our delight of achievement. To have made a perfect world would have been to condemn us to an imbecile idleness. Our God is better than this. He will have none of the selfishness of solitary achievement. It is His kindness which calls us to His aid, which secures us the happiness of the co-worker. He has filled the world with difficulty that we might know the bliss of overcoming it, and in so doing mount on perpetual steps of rising faculty.

Assuredly, the scheme of things has left enough for us to do. In no direction do we find a finished work. Our very truths, so called, are full of ragged edges. There is not a system of philosophy, from Plato to Neo-Hegelianism, or the latest Pragmatism, that you cannot knock holes in. Think of the religious evidences! Religion, to those who know its secret beauty, its hidden power, is the most precious value the world contains. The men who are without it—so numerous to-day—are the world's real paupers, the emptiest, forlornest of all God's creatures. There is no destitution, for its misery and despair, com-

parable to spiritual destitution. And yet this unspeakably precious value—how exposed, how recklessly defenceless it seems! It is left at the loosest of ends. Christianity comes into the world, and its existence is left apparently to a thousand chances. The four Gospels, its written witnesses, have the strangest of literary fortunes. The oldest and most authoritative of them—Mark—the one nearest the facts, appears to have dropped in its circulation to one mutilated copy, which the authors of Matthew and Luke discover, and from which they have extensively borrowed. The successive intellectual defences of Christianity, set up by friends who have often been more dangerous to it than its enemies, have continually been levelled to the ground. The Church has often been its worst foe. It has founded itself on everything but the truth; founded itself on a bogus donation of Constantine, on a set of forged decretals; on an assumption of infallibility which has shocked the world's sanity; has built its theology on a cosmic theory which has long been outgrown. We have to admit with Burkitt that "the more we investigate the early history of the Christian Church with open and unprejudiced eyes, the more we find ourselves in a strange world, dominated by fixed ideas that are not our fixed ideas, and permeated by an intellectual atmosphere quite different from ours."

The intellectual defences of Christianity have been, from Lucian to Diderot, the scorn of the world's wits. And to-day the Christian creeds and orthodoxies fail in a dozen ways to fit themselves to the demands of the modern mind. Such multitudes of really earnest thinkers are still in the condition

represented by the pathetic confession of Herbert Spencer: "Religious creeds which in one way or another occupy the sphere which material interpretation seeks to occupy, and fails the more it seeks, I have come to regard with a sympathy based on community of need; feeling that dissent from them results from inability to accept the solutions offered, joined with the wish that solutions could be found." And yet Christianity lives! It not only lives, but it grows and holds the field. It lives, despite all the mistakes of its theology, notwithstanding all the persevering efforts of the Church to misrepresent and to falsify it. What is the meaning of all this? There seems only one explanation. Christianity came not as a theory but as a life—a new kind of life. And its fortune has been like that of a savage who is indeed alive, but whose explanation of his life, of his body and his soul, are the most grotesque misrepresentation of the reality. When he gets some anatomy and physiology he will find some better though still inadequate theories. Christianity has persisted because men, apart from their crude thinking about it, have felt the thrill of its life. It has persisted because age after age it has offered to the soul its hidden manna; has ministered as nothing else has done to its moral and spiritual hunger. Have we not here another illustration of our doctrine of loose ends? Are not the evidences left in this condition in order that we each may find our own evidences, may become men of faith by taking all the risks of it, the risk-taking being part of our spiritual education? Coleridge, in his "Aids to Reflection," has put it all in a nutshell: "Evidences of Christianity? I am weary of the word. Make a man

feel the want of it, and you may safely trust to its own evidences!"

There are other directions to-day in which life seems at the loosest of ends, and where our human faculty, our communal sense, is called upon for its strongest assertion. Take the question of international armaments. The issue here is becoming more and more a simple one. It is an issue between the doctrine of hate and the doctrine of faith. The theory on which we are ruining ourselves with armies and battleships is the theory that while men in their personal relations may act on principles of mutual truth, honour and probity, nations, as such, are robbers, assassins and cut-throats, destitute of any beginning of ethics, ready to lie, to cheat, to thieve and to murder on any scale, given the opportunity. It is on this principle that we in England are invited—one may say commanded—to maintain a navy which is to surpass hugely all possible combinations of foreign fleets, because if that preponderance be imperilled we shall be immediately overwhelmed. Has it ever occurred to us to inquire why, on this supposition, all the other states take matters so easily? They are increasing their navies; yet Germany, Italy, Russia, France, Denmark, in fact, every other nation on earth, is to-day living under the shadow of the British preponderance. Yet do they expect that we shall devour them? Do they feel that unless they surpass us, as we have surpassed them, they have no security and are at our mercy? Are they contemplating budgets which will be beyond our level as their only chance of life? But if they, in their manifest inferiority, can go on quietly and without panic, why could not we in a

similar condition? Is it the number of our guns that keeps the peace, or is it the world's growing fellowship and common-sense? In international affairs we are still in the savage period of ethics. But the day is coming when nations will be as ashamed of their warships as we should be of going about decked with dagger and pistol. It is time we set about this business; that we set about in earnest the evangelisation of our world politics.

And are we not at a loose end in our social conditions—in the organisation of the best life for the people? We have countless anomalies here, but let us look at one of them. In a following essay on "Our Possessions" we speak of ownership as one of the essentials of a healthy life. To realise ourselves we need to have a hold on something outside ourselves. We cannot work properly without tools, without food and raiment, without the stimulus of returns. We want something to stand on before we can stand upright. There is a joy of possession which is our proper birthright. And it has been one of the great arguments against Socialism that in its war against private property it would destroy one of the chief stimulants of individual activity, one of life's acutest joys. But observe now what is happening. It is not Socialism, but Capitalism, as at present organised, that is destroying private property. That is to say, it is making it less and less possible for the great mass of men to possess anything of their own. The multiple shop is wiping out the small tradesman; landlordism, armed with the Enclosure Acts of past generations, has dispossessed the labourer of his free acres, of his rights of pasture, of his secure tenure, and has driven him to the towns.

The vast mass of the people have become wage-earners, and that in the employ not of persons whom they know, with whom they have personal relations, but of corporations of shareholders for whom the workman is only a creator of dividends. The owners become fewer and fewer, and their holdings ever more enormous. The net result is that private property, the possession of which every philosopher from Aristotle downwards has signalised as a condition of the full development of personality, one of the factors in the making of a free man, free in body and soul, is becoming the monopoly of a limited caste, leaving the great mass of mankind without this essential of a full manhood. Is it not time we woke up to the dread possibilities and actualities of this development? Is it not time we learned the simple ethics of economics, of wealth and of its proper distribution? What is the first business of the community if it is not the creation of conditions for the healthiest, happiest life for all its members? Is it a right state where one small and ever-diminishing section possess wealth to the extent of a disease, while the vast majority are in a worse disease for the want of it? This loose end will have to be gathered up. A nation's wealth is in the lives of its people, and that life will never reach its fulness of strength, character and enjoyment till the materials of it, visible as well as invisible, are brought once more within the reach of all.

There is a personal side to this topic which might well have occupied all our thought, but which we can now only briefly touch upon. How often do we seem, in our private fortunes, to be brought to a loose end? Some source of supply has been stopped;

some door of career has been suddenly slammed in our face. The well-defined track we have followed has all at once disappeared—we are faced with the wilderness, wherein we must strike a road of our own. Most of us who have lived any time in the world have had a touch of that experience. It is one of the greatest tests of character. We have been good enough for routine ; what good are we for this crisis of the unexpected ? It is here that strong men prove their strength. How often has that moment proved the starting-point of mightiest things ! It was so with Wesley when he found himself in hopeless conflict with the Anglican authorities, and he must choose some other way. And with General Booth, his true successor, when on that fateful morning he left the New Connexion Conference, his terms rejected, his career as one of its ministers closed, and himself in face of a new, untried world. Spurgeon had his moment when by the strangest of accidents he missed his collegiate training. But these men "made good," as the Americans say, of their loose end. And their example shows us how a loose end in life, encountered with courage and faith, may become to us our divine moment ; may prove the turning-point to our true vocation. Assuredly no man, whether he be great or small, should be afraid of his loose ends. They are life's great possibles ; they call upon what is in us. The gulf that yawns in front reveals your leaping power. The seeming ruin may be the beginning of your better fortunes. The world is full of hopes for the man who has hope in himself.

The way to master the world's loose ends is to have no loose ends in ourselves. Things may snap at the

circumference, but there will be no catastrophe if there is soundness at the centre. A man may find his world tumbling around him, as when Robertson of Brighton saw the dogmatic structure of his earlier creed crumbling to ruin. He found himself with nothing to believe in but God and duty. But in that wild hour those central anchors held; held till a clearer, fuller, saner Gospel faith was born in him, a faith which proved good for thousands of other storm-tossed souls. The thing is to hold on and never to give up. Believe, in the tempest's fiercest hour, that the world you are in is water-tight, and is not going to founder. You are in a world of loose ends, and the handling of them calls for every atom of strength and courage that is in you. But the farthest ends of them are not loose. They are gripped by a Hand that is Love and Omnipotence.

V

THE HEART OF THINGS

WHAT a *rôle* the word "heart" plays in language and in literature! It means for us the deepest, most vital thing there is. We speak of the heart of a matter, as that which, when all the outside trappings and concealments have been removed, lies there before us, the actual, central fact. London, we say, is the heart of the empire—because its greatest life pulses there; because its wealth is there concentrated; because the influences, the power generated there, touch the farthest limits of the English world. You find yourself on some elect spot of the mountains; on a glacier, with jagged peaks rising to right and left; where you breathe an air like wine, with a sky almost black in contrast with the dazzling white of the snows; the stillness unbroken save by the roar of the avalanche, the concentration of all that is beautiful, sublime, terrible; and you feel that you are in the heart of the Alps. Richard Jefferies, in one of his most moving books, speaks of putting his ear to the ground and hearing the beating of nature's heart. We talk of the heart of humanity, of the heart of religion.

The word, as thus used, is well derived. The physical heart, which gives us all these analogies, is the centre of our bodily life. You can get on, in a way, without arms and legs, without ears and eyes,

with half a lung. But strike the heart and all is over. It lies there in the centre of us; strongly entrenched behind its barrier of bony ribs, its tireless muscles the very concentration of energy, doing its one hundred thousand pulsations a day, its thirty-six and a-half millions in the year; while we sleep and while we wake, without a thought from us, without a hand's turn of our conscious help, performing its ceaseless systole, diastole. Were it to strike work; to propose to itself a holiday; to take one minute's rest, it were all over with us. And what is true of the physical heart is so largely true of all the applications of the word. The imperial city, the heart of an empire, is its best-guarded spot. Its people know that to strike at that is to strike at everything. The heart of a warship is its enginery. It is placed below, beneath the water line. A shell exploding on deck may do damage enough, but it can be repaired. When the engines are wrecked, the ship is helpless, dead. The heart of a thing is almost always a concealed affair, guarded jealously from the common eye. You have to reach it by devious ways, by persevering endeavour. You find that in all human creations, especially mental creations. The work of a dramatist, of a novelist, has always a heart inside it, a heart which he carefully conceals. It was the first thing that occurred to him; it is the last which he wishes shall occur to his reader. Around the guarded centre he builds up all manner of outworks, of approaches. He fills the ground with descriptions, with character sketches, with cunningly-devised bypaths which carry the inquirers off the scent. The heart of the thing is one single idea, the mystery, the secret, which is finally disclosed. The great sermon

of a great preacher will be the development of one idea, the thrusting home of one imperious thought. It was said of Newman that he would often preach a sermon in order to introduce one suggestion; a suggestion contained in a single sentence.

It is, we have said, not easy to get at the heart of things. It is so well concealed. You go up in your train of a morning with every seat filled. If you have a quick eye you can note the dress of each fellow traveller and his physical peculiarities. But each carries his secrets which you do not know. We British are a reticent race. There is a saying in France that not only is England an island, but every Englishman is an island; there is a lot of cold water to be got through before you reach him. England and France have lived all these centuries with only a few miles between them, but how much do they know of each other? What ideas the French have had of England, and we English of the French! And yet get behind the crust; get into the beating heart of each, as you do in their best literature, and what do you find? You find the same great instincts, the same ideas possessing them. Their hearts beat to the same tune. Go on to Germany, to Italy, you find the same thing. When you know the literature of a people, still more if you live among them, you begin to love them. That is what Lowell found. He, the American, had lived in London, in Paris, in Madrid; knew these peoples, their best literatures. And he found he was in love with them all. The present international distrust; the distrust which covers the sea with hateful warships; which burdens the peoples with the crushing load of armaments, is born of international ignorance. When the peoples

have come to know each other ; to know themselves as having the same honest affections, the same struggle, the same hopes and fears ; when they come to know the vastness of their soul's common capital, and the insignificance of their difference compared with that, they will break from the past *régime* of terror as a thing not only horrible but ludicrous ; an artificial antagonism between those who were born to be friends. There is a deeper question here, which we will come to presently.

We see how everything, the rose in your garden, an empire, a book, has its heart. When we take a wider, the widest view, and survey nature and life, the universe we live in, is there a heart there, and have we any means of finding it ? This vast scheme of the world, does it contain such a thing as a central idea controlling it ? We feel at once how strange it would be, how contrary to all analogy, were it not so. Is there a heart of things always in the particular and none in the universal ? Shall the bee, the flower, the man, the artist's creation, the moving story, have each its central thought, and shall this be lacking in the whole ? The early world, with magnificent unanimity, denied this negative. But our modern world has traversed their answer and begun the quest anew. Science, with a brand new set of instruments, has attacked the problem, and come back with some shattering conclusions. It has surveyed the universe from end to end—its infinitely great, its infinitely little—and finds nothing there but matter and force, bound in an iron necessity. It finds man himself only a part of the mechanism ; his supposed freewill a delusion, his thought a secretion of the brain, his God nowhere. His latest

poetry is so often a poetry of despair. Man—who or what is man ?

Rather some random throw
Of heedless nature's die,
'Twould seem, that from so low
Has lifted him so high.
Through untold æons vast
She let him lurk and cower ;
'Twould seem he climbed at last
In mere fortuitous hour,
Child of a thousand chances 'neath the indifferent sky.

We have lived through all this, through the age of scientific materialism. The withering blast of this stiff north-easter has hit us in the face, and made us draw our cloaks a little closer. But somehow, amid all the hurly-burly of the storm, we have found the heart within us to go on beating as steadily as before, its sturdy affirmatives making mock at all this tempest of denial. The scientists went out to find what assuredly is never to be found by their instruments or their methods of investigation. Their tools are not fine enough. They can weigh and measure, but the thing they sought is not to be weighed and measured. M. Loisy, the French heretic, whom Catholicism has found too big for its borders, has said on this theme what is surely the true and final thing. " God does not show Himself at the end of the astronomer's telescope. Geology, in its examination of the earthly crust, does not exhume Him. The chemist does not extract Him from his crucible. Although He is everywhere in the world, He is nowhere the direct object of science. He is also everywhere in the history of humanity, but He is no more a personage in history than He is an element of the physical

world. Does the history of religion present Him as an immediate and complete revelation of the Divine Being? Does it not show rather as a slow progress, of which each stage supposes that which preceded it, and prepares that which follows it? This history, even in the gospels, is a human history, so far as it is produced in humanity."

"Humanity," "a human history." Yes, it is there we get our real clue to the heart of things. Man, not that part of him which physical science can reach, his flesh and bones, the body that can be weighed and dissected, but the invisible behind that; the thought, the mind, the instincts and affections, the veritable soul. And it is in this inmost soul of man, as known to ourselves, as revealed in all human history, that we come nighest the heart of things, that we are in contact with the universal soul. And the great thing here is the unanimity of its verdict. We spoke a moment ago of the human heart as beating to the same tune. We return now to the deeper significance of this—its significance for religion. There have been writers of late, here and there, who have denied this unanimity. We are told of the ineradicable differences between Orient and Occident. "East is East and West is West." Lafcadio Hearn declares that where the Western thinks to the right the Eastern thinks to the left. The missionary platform of a century ago had for its main plank the doctrine that Christianity stood for the one true and saving faith amidst a world of false and soul-destroying ones. But *does* the East think contrary to the West? Does its soul point in an opposite direction? Does it in material things? Does Japan, in constructing its warships, in carrying on

its great engineering works, proceed on different mathematical principles from our own? It is our rival here because its mind works on exactly the same lines. And on this deeper question of the heart of things, what is the finding of our later, more accurate research? Was ancient Greece all wrong? Read Plato, read Aristotle, read the great dramatists. It was on Aristotle that the Catholic Church of the Middle Ages founded its whole philosophy; it was his categories it used for the formulation of its faith. The early Fathers got their doctrine of the state, of applied morality, from the Stoics. Go farther East. Read, say, the sacred literature of ancient Persia. Its doctrine is of a God who is not only holy and pure, but is the God essentially of love, of grace, of forgiveness and redemption to the uttermost. It confronts evil, concentrated in Ahriman, the Persian Satan, with the conquering might of Ormuzd, the spirit of the good. And observe this: the God here worshipped is not only conqueror of evil, but—in this so far surpassing much of our mediæval theology—he conquers to forgive and to reclaim. He enters the great fight with the desire, not to destroy, but to save his enemy. He beseeches Ahriman to become good, to love the good, to have pity on himself. In his inexhaustible grace he follows him with entreaties to become converted, to accomplish his salvation, to find his happiness in reaching a new and better mind. Our best missionary thinkers and workers of to-day, better instructed than those of old, are preaching a Christianity to the East, not as a contradiction and condemnation of all it had known before, but as a completion of that earlier divine

education under which their fathers had felt their way to God.

To-day enlighted Christians hold and proclaim their gospel as showing the nearest approach to the heart of things which has yet been opened to our race. And of this heart of things it is the *heart*, and not all which has surrounded and so often hidden it, which they hold to. The hoary theologies which have grown up around it are, much of them, quite beyond our modern digestion. We wander amongst them in a reverent freedom, taking out of them what we can receive, what helps, and leaving the rest. So it is with the Bible. We follow Luther's plan here. He held its inspired part to be what inspired him. We moderns have a wrong way of reading the Bible. It is the worst-used book in the world. We have chopped it up into verses and into chapters, and our preachers complete the business of dismemberment by singling out one verse, cutting it off from the rest, and making it the basis of a discourse on things in general. Was ever a poor book so ill-used? It is as if a speaker should be compelled to stop at every sentence, while somebody else gets up and starts off on a separate disquisition on that sentence. The sermon may be excellent in other ways, but don't go to it for your study of the Bible. How do you read a Pauline epistle? You will make no sense of it unless you read it—as its first addressees read it or heard it read—from end to end. Take it in that way, to see what the man is driving at. Have you ever, reading him so, savoured the fine, sardonic irony of that master of sarcasm? He writes to the self-satisfied Corinthians: "We are fools for Christ's sake, but ye are wise; we are weak, but

ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised." "We know, of course, that we poor apostles are nobodies; it is to you Corinthians one must look for the last word in wisdom!" That is the modern English of it.

That, however, is a digression. We are talking of the Bible, and mainly of the New Testament, as a whole. We read it to-day to find the heart of it. We pass a good deal of it by, as belonging to the age it was written in. We realise, as Burkitt, that essentially conservative critic, realises, that "the more we investigate the early history of the Christian Church with open and unprejudiced eyes, the more we find ourselves in a strange world, dominated by fixed ideas that are not our fixed ideas, and permeated by an intellectual atmosphere quite different from ours." There is much in Paul we do not accept. The modern woman is in universal revolt against his doctrine of woman. We study some of his rabbinisms with an amused curiosity. His idea of the immediate coming of Christ, and the manner of it, has been falsified by history. And of some things in the Gospel the same criticism holds. But are these things the heart of the matter?

Coleridge said that he valued the Bible above all other books because it found him, and found him at the deepest part of his nature. The heart in it spoke to the heart in him. And what is the heart in it? Read the Gospels—the story of Christ's life; read the Acts, the Epistles—the story of Christ's Spirit; and what is the note there all through? It is the story of holy love; of what that love is in God; of what it can be in man. You can never bring your sin there without it being reproved and

shamed; you can never bring your burden there without it being lifted. The Cross gives us Ormuzd and Ahriman, not in cloudy epic, but in actual history; goodness fighting evil, not with earthly weapons, but spiritual; fighting, by suffering, by giving, by loving, by dying. And you, in your turn, get the heart of this by trying it, by living it. You find what loving is by loving, what forgiveness is by forgiving, what the Cross of Calvary is by the cross in your own soul. You become an initiate of Christianity by the Christian experience, and by that alone.

Though Christ in Joseph's town
A thousand times were born,
Till He is born in thee
Thy soul is still forlorn.
The Cross on Golgotha
Can never save thy soul;
The cross in thine own heart
Alone can make thee whole.

It is here, in the cross of holy, sacrificing love in God, in the cross of holy sacrificing love in your own soul, that you reach the world's deepest secret, that you find the heart of things.

VI

LIFE AND TIME

THERE is nothing more familiar to us than the idea of time, and nothing more obscure. Time ! we carry it about with us in the watch that bulges our waistcoat pocket ; it beams at us in the face of the grandfather's clock ; it shrieks out of the siren that wakes the factory worker. It is in all the dates, in all the seasons ; we eat and sleep by it ; we measure our age by it. The busy man says time is money ; the lazy man exhausts himself in efforts to kill it. In Christmas poems and pictures it figures as the old man with the scythe ; the old man who, were we never so fast, will overtake and finish us. And yet if time catches us we never catch it. It is the most elusive of entities. We can neither see it, nor hear it, nor hold it. The present moment ! You can never put your hand on it. As you think it, it is gone. Analyse a moment, and you find it has a past, a present and a future. And that middle term is never there. In the fact of realising it has become a past. Many of our common notions about time are a great delusion. What ordinarily goes under that name is really something else. And, as we propose to show, the forgetting of that fact has been the cause of some singular and momentous errors, errors which have spread into religion, into theology, and into our whole conduct of life. Some clearer thinking on

this question should help us to a truer view of matters that concern us all.

What we call time is, in many directions, simply movement. It is the putting forth and the expenditure of energy. That is what our clock-time amounts to. The hands are going round because a spring has been wound up, or because weights are exercising their downward strain. Our earth's movement, as a recorder of time, means exactly the same thing. It is just so much work, the result of so much motor force. It is work related to space and to movement in it. It is the same thing when we talk of our age. When we speak of our years, and the effect they have had upon us, carrying us from youth to mid-life, and from mid-life to old age, what is it we really mean? Time, regarded as a sort of metaphysical entity, has really nothing to do with all this. The factor in the business is just life; the incessant growth, decay, replacement of cells, of tissue, of bone, of muscle; the incessant work upon us of events, experiences, ideas. It is an affair of movement, of biological and mental movement, of the expenditure of energy in these departments. And when we pass from the individual to the race, to humanity as a whole, we are met with the same fact. We talk of the stone age, of antiquity, of the mediæval period, of the Renaissance and so on, as though everything here, events, manners, ideas, had to do with the mysterious something we call time. Such habits, such limitations of knowledge, such barbarisms, we aver, belong to that age. We say "the stone age could not have produced a Shakespeare," "the Reformation was a birth of time"; we talk of the *Zeitgeist* or "time spirit." It is a way of speaking, which has its

uses so long as we know what we mean. Only, let us remember, it is not an accurate way. What was going on in the stone age, or in mediævalism, or at the Reformation, was not, fundamentally, an affair of the clock ; it was throughout an affair of vitalism ; of the condition of body and brains ; of the working there of the vital processes ; of the height to which the vital forces in these bodies and souls had reached ; of the quality and amount of the inner energy which was then being expended. That is the real bottom fact. When we speak of these as "times" we are simply adding to the fact an idea of our own minds, an idea whose illusiveness only becomes truly apparent to us when we try to analyse it.

The extent to which this idea, on some important subjects, has played tricks with us, may be illustrated, as a starting point, by the way in which we have been accustomed to contrast time and eternity. We have thought of the two as something different—profoundly, solemnly different. We speak with awe of the transition from one to the other. With time we are, or think we are, on familiar terms. We are quite at home with it ; it is a business proposition ; we can make jokes about it. Nobody jokes about eternity. The thought of it strikes on the soul with the force of all that is tremendous. It is religion's final word, its most august appeal. And there is a true instinct in all that, though the thought connected with it is a confused one. Let us try and clear it a little. Here, for instance, is a simple proposition. We think of the living as in time, of the dead as in eternity. But if they are there, still living, that simple fact abolishes by itself the distinction between the two. If the dead are living

now, they are in time as much as we are; they are under our own conditions of duration. What really has happened to them is not a change made of the difference between time and eternity. The change is one which these terms do not represent. It is a change in their organism, in the conditions under which that organism is acting, in the circumstances by which it is surrounded. What we are really talking about is, we say, no question of time and eternity, but a question of life, of its possible growths, its possible transformations.

Where our thinking has so often gone wrong here has been in concentrating it so often on an idea of duration, instead of on what really matters—to wit, the quality of our life. Duration, such as we ordinarily conceive it, is not at all the main point here. For a Sir Isaac Newton and for a Hottentot the clock may be ticking out the same number of hours and minutes. They are living, we may say, in the same time. But is that to say anything real about them? We see that it is the quality of their life that really matters. Put these two in what you call time or in what you call eternity, and still it is just the quality that matters. This is where the question touches religion in its highest point. When the Scripture speaks to us of the divine life, of the eternal life we can find in God, we are here not on a matter of duration. We are on another theme altogether—on that of the intensity, of the elevation, of the essential quality of being. That "eternal" is now, for us here just as much as in any possible future state. We get to it, not by any ticking of the clock, but by processes going on within us, by our entering into relations with the highest that there is.

This confusion in our time-thinking, when we look into it, is seen to be at the root of some of our acutest theological controversies. Take, for instance, the question of religion and history. It was the contention of Lessing, and after him of the Hegelians, that a final religion could not be one based on certain alleged historical facts. The facts here, given as occurring in the far past, might be mis-stated, or they might not have occurred at all. We have the same thing to-day in the assaults on the historicity of Jesus. The final religion, we are told, must have a surer foundation than this; it must rest on spiritual principles, on eternal ideas, which range above the mutations of time. Well, you may admit the spiritual principles, and the eternal ideas, but they will be no good to you by themselves. You still cannot get on without the history, and for the reason that the only way by which they could come to us was by being lived. For us mortals facts are before ideas; you must live before you can think. Religion is only possible as it exists in personalities, personalities developed, not by time, but by the process of life. It was not mere ideas, but the life in those personalities that set religion going, and it was the highest life, as exhibited in Christ, that set the highest religion going. Where Lessing and the idealists after him have really helped us is in the view that religious history has no *isolated* facts; that revelation, incarnation and atonement are not events and transactions that belong to one period, or even to one Person, however they may be culminated there, however they may receive there the divinest illustration; but that they enter into the whole structure and history of humanity, eternal

ideas made manifest in flesh. It is because Christianity has exhibited this process in its highest form, and has in Christ summed up the whole sequence, that it stands as the religion of humanity, the eternal religion.

Readers of Bergson's "Time and Free Will" will remember how he exposes the fallacy of the determinists who deduce their study of the action of the will always from a study of the act as finished, whereas the only proper way of answering the question is from studying the action while it is actually in progress; a study from which a quite different conclusion is reached. But there is another fallacy of the determinists in reference to time which also needs exposure. It is that of their doctrine of cause and effect, of antecedent and consequent. Hume and the materialists who have followed him have proceeded on the assumption that all that is in the effect is already in the cause. The effect was simply a following in time of what already lay in the antecedent. Hence their conclusion, that matter being, in their view, the antecedent to mind and spirit, all the spiritual was contained in matter, was explainable by matter and shared the fate of matter. A moment's glance at the facts should be enough to dispel these ideas. If things were so there would be no difference between the cause and the effect. But it is precisely the difference between them that first strikes us. In the effect a something new has emerged which was not there before. That is why we call it an effect, why we separate it as a result from what was there before. Something has been added. The creative process, the evolutionary

process proceeds always by this " something added," a new draft on the hidden resources of the universe. To say that when spirit is developed in matter it is matter and nothing more, is one of those gratuitous assumptions which a truer philosophy is already learning to put finally on one side.

This time-question, on its philosophical side, is then, we see, sufficiently productive. There are many more sides of it bearing on doctrinal and speculative matters which we might discuss. But we must leave them, in order to find room for one or two of those practical conclusions which, perhaps, to most of us, come more closely home. Why, to take one of these, is it that in reviewing our past we are so apt to pass on it a disparaging judgment? The aged Jacob, standing before Pharaoh, says of his past: " Few and evil have been the days and years of my life! " It is a summary which the aged in their life-review are so apt to make. Is it a just one? Or does it not come from the fact that our pains rather than our pleasures live in our remembrance, and give to them an altogether disproportionate importance? Our troubles imprint themselves on the memory more deeply than our joys. You are so vividly conscious of a toothache. But who records, for himself or others, the weeks and months when he had no toothache? Who takes note of the long succeeding days when he slept soundly, when he awoke fit and well, ate with appetite, saw with his eyes, heard with his ears all the world's pleasant sights and sounds, realised in a thousand ways a general sense of well-being, of the deep joy of existence? Father Jacob had had more good days than evil ones. His

memory was at fault. That is the matter with us all. Had it been otherwise, had the sum of evil for man surpassed his sum of good, the race would long ago have ceased to exist.

Those who want to make most of their time will think of it as capital, and will use it as such. Whatever else we have lacked we have had this, and it is much. When this year is completed we shall have had just as much of it as a Rothschild or a Rockefeller. We have all been millionaires of minutes. And here, as with the capital we call cash, there are two ways of dealing with it, the way of thriftless spending and the way of productive use. There is no more searching question than this: "What have we done with our hours?" There are dozens of ways of spending them, the only return for which is a sense of exhaustion, of mere wastage, and of desolating vacuity. There is no poverty so squalid as that of the time-spendthrift. The poverty here is of body and soul. In honest labour, on the contrary, you have not only the present joy it offers, but the fact that it is an investment which, for all the future, brings in its dividends. To learn to do things is to strengthen our life, to broaden in all directions its acreage of possibility. We ought to abolish the idler, whether at the top or the bottom of the social scale, in order to give the poor fellow a taste of life's real flavour. The best training we know of, a training which should become universal, is that of some of the American popular universities, where the students earn their bread by daily hours of manual labour—in the fields, the gardens, the carpenter's shop—with certain other daily hours for the mental cultures. To get that training should be every man's birthright,

and every woman's. A robust physical vigour put into the brain's work ; a well-stored brain directing the body's work—here is your combination for a full and wholesome life. Your mechanical task ceases to be mechanical when a full mind is behind it. As the body swings axe or hammer, the soul is exulting in all its poetry, its idealism, its finest emotions. In return the toughened body brings to the mental discipline all the glow of its strength. The two in their happy union help each other to all the highest that is there.

Time's most fascinating problem for us is that of its ending. As the years close in upon us we seem afloat, alone in our frail bark, on a river with a cataract below, whose growing roar warns us of the approaching, inevitable plunge. What is to come after ? Here, as we have said, the question is not what time or what eternity will do with us, it is what life will do with us. Has our personality that within it, and that without it, which will carry it through ? That the mind of man, alone of all created things in this world, contemplates death, foresees it, adjusts itself to it ; above all, carries to it an invincible forward look, seems evidence that it has dealings with death that are quite other than physical. Its instinct is with Heraclitus : " There await men, after death, things other than they look for or expect." The clearest minds seem here to have the fullest assurance. Said Goethe in his old age : " At the age of seventy-five one must, of course, think something of death. But the thought never gives me the least uneasiness ; for I am fully persuaded that our spirit is a being of a nature quite indestructible, and that it actually

continues from eternity to eternity." After all, as we have said, for one end of life as for the other, the main thing is not a question of mere duration, it is one of the quality of being. If we are in harmony with that Divine Will which is the nature of things, the mere continuance question will not trouble us. We fall asleep at night quite easily; it is a pleasurable sensation. We are waked in the morning by a power not our own. And we can fall asleep in that greater manner with an equal composure, an equal trust in that larger power. Such a nature accepts Höffding's verdict. The exhortation, "Take no thought for the morrow" can be applied with far greater justification to the life after death than to our attitude towards the actual morrow of this actual life. To know God now is eternal life. That is enough for our "now." We know it is a life divine, and its finest fruit is a perfect trust for all the future to its source in the Eternal Love.

VII

WHAT IS LEFT

The world is very keen to-day—keener, perhaps, than ever it was before—on gaining, on winning, on accumulating. We are all so enthusiastic about growth, whether it be of our fortune, or our knowledge, or our baby. We like the movement upward, the ampler air, the sense of higher powers, of widening influence. Growth is the parent, the feeder of optimism. It is a good world so long as we are "making good" in it. But life has another side, to which the world has never yet learned to accustom itself. It is easy to make a philosophy of winning. What we are yet in want of is a proper philosophy of losing. Here it is that nature seems to turn cynic. She gives us our little run, and then reverses the engine and turns it the other way. Side by side with her system of gifts and largess is her system of denudation, of taking away. She creates and fosters; then smites and destroys. And it is of that process that all our pessimism is born. For this business makes a deeper impression on us than the other. The early world had found this out. Says Livy: *Segnius homines bona quam mala sentiunt* (men do not feel their good things so keenly as their evil ones). A cut finger will make more impression on you than a sugar-plum. A loss seems to go deeper into your mind than a gain. It is, we

say, out of their losses that men's pessimism is born. Björnson lost his belief in immortality because of the apparent shrinkage in values of later life. If, he says, we went on growing all the time, we might believe in a progress which death did not prevent. But we are worn out before we die. We are growing up to fifty or sixty, and then we decay till all that makes life great and valuable is taken from us.

'Tis a common complaint which every age has echoed. Anacreon had uttered it years ago. Our later day has been vociferous on this subject. Says Benjamin Constant: "When the age of passion is over, what else can one desire except to escape from life with the least possible pain?" James Mill found life a poor affair after the first age of eager sensation and curiosity was over. Amiel, at forty, finds all his early hopes fled; nothing before him but solitude and "a death in the desert." Schopenhauer likens life to a show at a country fair. We are interested and amused with the conjurer's tricks when we see them for the first time. But when we have seen them several times over we grow weary and disgusted with the business. As we listen to these wailings our wonder is not at the poverty of life, but at the poverty of the conception of it which is here presented. We are sure it is a wrong one, if only for our inward certainty that despair is a psychological mistake. "Despair," says Vauvenargues, "is the worst of our errors." We are sure of it, and sure also that a philosophy built on "the worst of our errors" must be a false philosophy.

Before we acquiesce in notions of this sort it is worth while looking a little more closely into the

matter; to inquire whether nature's way here is, after all, simply a destructive way; whether her takings may, after all, not turn out to be a subtle way of giving. It is worth while to inquire whether she ever does destroy anything; to inquire into what she leaves behind; whether we know enough of her method of decay to speak of it as a confession of her poverty of resource; whether under her system our losses do not leave us richer than before.

On a mere surface view we come upon some interesting facts. We see, to begin with, that nature has a tolerably full treasury, even of material things. Man is her most wasteful child, but when he has done his worst he seems a long remove from the bottom of her basket. We are reminded here of what Christopher North says of the harvest of the sea. In the "Noctes" he makes the shepherd say: "I never look at the sea without lamenting the backwardness of its agriculture. Were every eatable land animal extinct, the human race could dine and sup out o' the ocean till a' eternity." We denude the soil of its fertile elements by a wasteful tillage and the hillsides of their forests by an equal recklessness. But is this new bareness all a taking, a vacuity? Far from it. While this is going on nature drops something into the human mind; drops an idea. An idea of economy, for one thing; to take care of what is left of our forests; to plant new ones; to repair the waste in the soil by imparting new fertilising elements. Then further the idea, after scratching the surface of her treasures, to look deeper into them, in search of hidden powers, a search which is being marvellously rewarded.

One of the surprising things which this search has

brought to light is the fact that actually in nature nothing *is* destroyed. Your fire burns itself out. The fuel which composed it has disappeared. It is gone, you say. Yes, but it has not gone far. Not one atom of it is really lost. It has simply changed its form. If a search were made, all its equivalents could be recovered. So when man has denuded his forests, exhausted his soil, spent his resources, with utmost prodigality, he has, after all, only touched his revenues. His banker, nature, has taken care of them. Her strong-room is crammed with securities. The very things we have been spending have gone there. All we have burned, or used, or misused, are still in her hands. She is as rich as ever and we are rich in her. The seeming losses have been gains. A big catastrophe, such as a burnt-out city, as at San Francisco or Chicago, has not destroyed anything really, finally, but it has created something. It has restarted the citizens with a new energy and a fund of fresh knowledge. Disaster has sharpened wits. It has set men on to the survey of causes; of bad forms of building, of bad arrangements to be henceforth avoided; of new safeguards to be provided; of better ways of handling the raw elements, of subduing their faculty of revolt, of increasing their capacity of service. Here we see how nature's taking away has turned out to be her subtle way of giving.

Note, too, another result of these losses. They bring to us, if we rightly accept them, a new and keener appreciation of what is left. One of Wesley's earliest experiences was that of the fire which destroyed his father's vicarage at Epworth. He tells how, after his own narrow escape from death,

his father, finding all his family around him unhurt, thanked God for His preserving mercies. He had lost his home, but his dear ones were all there. He felt rich, as he had never felt before, in the treasures he had left. And, indeed, 'tis one of the finest, healthiest of mental exercises, in the midst of life's deprivations, to remember what is left. So much is gone; but when you go over the sum of what remains, how immense the account that is left to your credit! When that touch of gout worries you it is well to note that your eyesight is good and your hearing perfect. You cannot walk, but you can read. Says Isaak Walton: "Every misery that I miss is a new mercy, and therefore let us be thankful." That is not merely piety; it is excellent good sense. There is always a giving with the taking. The Duke of Gloucester, brother of George III., remarked once to Horace Walpole, whose niece he had married: "I thank God that I have such bad health. I was very ambitious, but I have had time to reflect, and now I have no view of doing what is not right." It sounds a curious confession of faith, but it meant all this to the man himself. He knew he had received more than he had lost; received it in losing. People find their mission, their bit of genuine life-work, out of their troubles. Lamartine records of Mme. Roland that the unhappiness of her early married life led her to devote herself to works of widest charity. "She revenged herself on the destiny which refused her personal happiness by consecrating her life to the well-being of others." Would Wesley have proved the apostle he was had his domestic affairs been brighter? Was not his failure in that direction part of his immense success

in that other? Out of that personal void what a fulness did he make for others!

Life, we say, by its very deprivations is continually teaching us, and thereby enriching us. Its chief lesson here is to lay up in our treasury the stock which is least assailable. In times of disturbance people often convert their property into easily portable forms; forms such as they can carry with them. In this hurly-burly of a world we do well to follow that method; to have our chief treasure with us, in us, where we can, at any time, put our hand on it. When everything outside is adrift, when the world of circumstance is full of menace, then is the time to fall back on our inner accumulations. Well for us if they are large, and of the durable sort. Let us cite here an example of what we mean. Have our readers, we wonder, read anything of Edgar Quinet? His "*Lettres d'Exil*" are an inspiring revelation of a truly noble soul. Quinet, consummate scholar, profound thinker, with a soul athirst for truth and righteousness, was one of the proscribed of Napoleon III.'s *coup d'état*. For twenty years he lived the life of an exile from his beloved France, refusing all the tempting offers made him to return to his home and to imperial favour, at the price of his conscience. During that period he was a constant sufferer; homeless, almost friendless. He could get no publisher in France to dare to publish his writings. After that twenty years, after Sedan and the fall of the Empire, he comes back to France, to find it in the grip of the enemy. He endures the siege of Paris, and his last five years are spent in the struggle to re-create his country, to lift it from the abyss into which it had fallen. What a life! you say.

Twenty years of exile, with such a return from exile! And yet hear his own account of his life. He had been happy in that seeming desolate period; happy because his conscience was clear, because he had cultivated to the best he knew his inner self; because he had laboured for the truth and for the right. "It is certain," he says, "that we reach happiness only through our reason and our will. I was unhappy in my youth. But since I took possession of myself all has been different. I understand and I feel that the gift of life is a great benefaction. One receives all the universe in usufruct. The one thing is to know how to use it and make profit of it. I have grown happier as I have grown older." From this man, outwardly almost everything had been taken. But in taking, as he best knew, everything had been given.

Here comes in a question of education. While, in nature's beneficent order, so many of our seeming losses turn out to be gains, it must not be forgotten that we lose a good many things we ought to have retained. A once famous professor remarked in our hearing to his students: "Gentlemen, if you knew all the Sanscrit that I have forgotten you would be very well set up there." It seemed a pity that he should have learned just to forget. Why do we lose so much of our schoolboy and student lore? For one thing, so much of it was quite useless. Says Sydney Smith: "I believe while I was a boy at school I made above ten thousand Latin verses; and no man in his senses would dream in after life of ever making another." It is certain that whatever our early acquirements, whether the making of Latin verses or anything else, we shall

infallibly lose them, unless they are kept in view, and in some sort of practice, in after life. It would be the biggest sum that arithmetic ever tackled to calculate the time that has been lost in putting into pupils' brains the things that will fall out again in after years. Have we not here one of the first principles of a true education, for ourselves and the nation at large? Surely what should be taught, whether in the village school or in the university, is what the learner can use. Latin and Greek are all right for the men who will want them for their life work. Nine-tenths of those who are spending years over them will never use them, and will make all speed to forget them. Let those years be given to German and French, and they will possess in them living forces of a living world. What is a real education for our workers, except that which fits them for their work, whether it be housewifery for the girl, or the mastery of a craft for the growing lad? We keep what we use; of the rest, what is left is a *débris* that is hardly worth houseroom.

After all, the great education is life itself. If we have been faithful learners in that school, we shall find that the things that seem gone are not really gone. They always leave something behind; there is never a real void. The natural process, within us and without, is, in fact, a distillation of essences, of more value really than the thing in bulk with which we first have to do. That is why the advance into life, when we have left youth and the vigour of manhood behind us, has produced deposits of these finer essences of themselves, that have made the soul so much richer and fuller than before. The true learners, as we have seen in

Quinet, in losing the material, have grasped the spiritual, the one enduring, the one satisfying thing. This, which happens to the separate soul, is what is happening in religion, the soul's great feeder and sustainer. Modern religion has witnessed the decay and death of much that once seemed a part of it. As we study that process we see the deep truth of Carlyle's saying: "The old never dies till this happens, till all the soul of good that was in it gets itself transformed into the practically new." You compare the theological systems of the seventeenth century with the thought of to-day, and so much seems to have gone that you are apt to ask, "What is left?" With educated minds the old doctrine of Biblical infallibility has gone as completely as the doctrine of Church infallibility which, for Protestantism, it had replaced. The elaborate dogmatic systems of that age are all in the melting-pot. We look at all these matters from a new standpoint and with new results. Have we, in this process, lost anything? The new science of the world shows that to be impossible. Nature holds all she has. She loses nothing. Her infinite transformations are never a losing game. And we may be sure that if this be so in the material world it is not less so in the spiritual. The scientific process, the critical process, the philosophic process that have been at work in religion have given more than they have taken. Science in offering us evolution has immeasurably enriched religious thought. Philosophy in its latest phase has burst through materialism and shown man as a spiritual being in a spiritual universe. And criticism has given us a Bible which is more than ever the Book of humanity, the inexhaustible store-house of the soul.

Christianity is being distilled to its essence, as an ultimate force which you can transform but can never destroy. All that has happened and is happening in this sphere makes us more sure, with Fichte, that " Christianity yet carries in its breast a renovating power of which we have no conception. Hitherto it has only acted on individuals and through them on the State indirectly. But whoever can appreciate its power, whether he be a believer or an independent thinker, will confess that it is destined some day to become the inner organising power of the community ; and that it will reveal itself to the world in all the depths of its ideas and the full richness of its blessing."

Pessimism, we have said, has built itself on life's losses, its denudations. But a saner philosophy revises that judgment. It discovers nature to be no such cynic as has been imagined. She takes that she may give. She withdraws the material to find room for the spiritual. No loss but has in it a secret gain. Goethe has put into *Faust* her final word, " We bid you to hope."

VIII

MAN THE PROPHET

MAN the prophet appears to have been busy in that *rôle* ever since he was man, and he is quite busy in it now. There are prophets in Bond Street who will read your future in your hand; who will exchange your gold for golden predictions. There are loungers at tavern-bars, and "places where they bet," who are prodigal of "certs" and "sure things." Mr. Baxter is no longer with us, but there are disciples of his school who are in all the secrets of the Apocalypse, and can tell you from Daniel the exact date of the world's end. The political and the social prophets are all in full cry. Mr. Wells sketches for us what will be going on in 1950. The time is fruitful in prophets of gloom, Cassandras who foresee the speedy "end of all things." Failures and falsifications never damp the ardour of our foretellers. Yet their failures, one would think, are enough to damp the most ardent of them. Time has from the beginning been pouring cold water, pouring it in cascades and Niagaras, upon these efforts. Every century has announced the coming cataclysm, but it has not come yet. The early Christians, the New Testament writers among them, saw the Second Coming within a year or two. Twenty centuries nearly have elapsed, and still our planet rolls along. In mediæval literature we have predictions as vivid and precise as those of the

Jewish Apocalyptists, and all of them wrong. It is surprising how the coolest heads are all at sea in their reading of the immediate future. Erasmus was quite sure that Luther was done with at Worms. So was Leo X. "The monk would know better when he had slept off his wine." It was Leo and not Luther who by and by knew better. Arthur Young, one of the coolest and keenest observers of the eighteenth century, was sure that after the meeting of the French States General the Revolution was all over. Right up to July, 1870, Edgar Quinet, one of the sanest of Frenchmen, is expressing his despair of ever seeing France delivered from the Napoleonic despotism. It was within a few months of the time when Napoleon was a prisoner and France a republic! As we think of these vaticinations, of their cocksureness and their dogmatic bitterness, we feel the aptness of that appeal of Cromwell to the Scottish General Assembly: "I beseech you, in the bowels of Christ, think it possible you may be mistaken!"

The history of prophecy has been marked, as perhaps no other history, by mistakes, by delusions, by affirmations without proof; down to drivelling absurdities and criminal chicaneries. It has been one of the most conspicuous outlets of human vanity. Comte foretells the world-wide establishment of Comtism in a given, and brief, number of years. Charles Fourier names the separate dates on which his phalanstery system will found itself successively in France, in Europe, in the East, and throughout the world, as the final form of human society. Each enthusiast in turn is going to revolutionise the earth, and to do it quick. The old earth smiles, gives them in turn their six feet of soil, and goes rolling on.

Is there, then, no true prophecy? There is a great deal. When all is said, this title of "Man the prophet" is a true title. It designates one of the deepest, most vital, most significant of the human functions. We can never understand man, the soul and life of him, the history of him, without taking account of the side that all this represents. The excrescences, the counterfeits, the falsities, are simply the irregular growths, the crude output of a genuine faculty, whose dwelling and activity go down to the deeps of his nature. The great prophets of Palestine—Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the rest; the inspired teachers of Greece—Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato; the Christian leaders of faith—Paul, Augustine, Francis, Luther, Wesley; these are peaks rising to heights unreached of their fellows, yet rooted in the same soil, drawing, if in larger measure than the rest, from the same common fund of power. Our word "prophet," the Greek *prophetes*, means literally one who speaks for, in the name of another. There are other meanings, linking it with the Hebrew *nabi*, the Greek *mantis*, the Latin *vates*, suggesting seership, abnormal faculties of the soul.

Both, or rather all, these meanings, how deeply suggestive they are! The great ones in this line have always been speakers for another. The "Thus saith the Lord" of the Hebrew teachers was no mere formality. There was that within them—it is in us, too, and asserts itself at times—which was more than their own mental faculty, more infinitely than their own personal assertiveness. It was that august voice—in them and in us—which rises at times above the din of our desires, of our

selfish aims, proclaiming itself as something higher and deeper. We listen to that voice in the seers as the voice of God; and that because we recognise the same voice in ourselves. Plutarch has finely expressed this feeling in his essay on the *daimon* of Socrates. It was, he says, "the influence of a superior intelligence and a divine soul operating on the soul of Socrates, whose calm and holy temper fitted him to hear their spiritual speech, which, though filling all the air around, is heard only by those whose souls are freed from passion and its perturbing influence."

Connected with this human prophetism, though not perhaps of its deepest essence, there are, in many instances, occult and abnormal powers, which science at last is beginning to recognise as one of the most fruitful fields of investigation. The phenomena of double or multiple personalities, of second sight, of revelations of far distant and even future occurrences, have become too numerous and too well authenticated to permit of being treated lightly. They have taken their place as facts of human experience, to be taken note of in any attempt to penetrate the mysteries of life. It is—as Bergson has said—in this region, the region of the unconscious and of the sub-conscious mind, that mental science has to seek for its deepest truths. There have been in modern times flashes of vision into the future which transcend all the accepted canons of empirical science. What, for instance, are we to make of La Harpe's story of the prophecy of Cazotte, who, in the year 1788, at a fashionable *salon*, told the fortunes of the company present? Cazotte, an oddity we are told, suddenly began to

prophesy. Condorcet would die self-poisoned on a prison floor. Chamfort would give himself a score of gashes to escape the guillotine. Vicq d'Azyr, Bailly, were told of their doom. Madame de Grammont would die on the scaffold. "At least," she cries, "you will give me the consolation of a confessor!" "No," is the answer. "The last victim who will be so attended will die before you; it will be the King of France." Within six years every word of his prophecy was fulfilled. Assuredly in the depths of the human soul there are powers of insight into the unknown, even into the future, which are yet unplumbed, that are as full of mystery as the universe by which it is surrounded.

We are apt to overlook the way in which, in our commonest actions, we find ourselves linked to the future; how our everyday doings are essentially proleptic. When we eat our dinner, when we go to bed at night, we are acting prophetically. We eat because we believe that the meal will have a nourishing and strengthening effect upon us. We invite sleep in the conviction that we shall thereby be refreshed and restored. All the things we touch and handle in the course of the day are dealt with in the same prophetic faith. We act on them in a given way, sure that they will react in a given way. And we are easy about what they will do to-morrow because we know what they do to-day. This is the basis of all the predictions of science. Science holds to the constancy of nature. Having once ascertained the nature, the action of a thing, of an element, it proceeds on a belief in the fidelity of that thing to its nature. Heat expands, cold contracts, gravitation pulls, and will continue doing so. Nobody

has assured us of this, but it is a faith which works, and the contract has, so far, never been broken.

And it is here, surely, that we finally come upon the central ground and basis of all true religious prophecy. The seer, what is he ? Is he not just the man who sees deeper than others, more clearly than others ; sees right into the heart of things, into the essential equality of being ; one who, from an accurate knowledge of the great spiritual forces at work in the world, can predict how they will act, and what results will come from this action ? This it is which has made the prophets—the true ones—the great moral authorities of the world. Whether teaching in Judæa, in Greece, in Germany, in England, the men of the spirit have had practically one message. Uttered in all languages, in a hundred different forms, it has meant always and everywhere the same thing. They have stood, all of them, for a Kingdom of God, for a rule of righteousnesss, for the supremacy of the spirit over the flesh, for the rule of love, for the redemption of our lower nature by a higher nature, for the final triumph of goodness.

It did indeed require an insight deeper than the common to perceive, especially in the earlier, ruder days, the conquering qualities of the spiritual, to predict its future from what it was. The insight, you may say, was a scientific one. It was the result of a true diagnosis. Just as the modern researcher, probing and testing the qualities of radium, can give his forecast of what it is to accomplish, so the prophet, the moral genius, whether he lived three thousand years ago or is among us to-day, predicts what the spiritual will do from his knowledge of what it contains. The latest to appear in the human

development, it seems the weakest thing of all. It was, for it was in its first infancy. Amid all the rough, wild forces around it, man's animalism, his ferocity, could it survive ? But the prophets saw its quality ; saw the divinity that was in it. And so they were sure of it, and of themselves its heralds and spokesmen. They might die, be tortured, crucified, but it would live and would conquer.

To-day we have no recognised order of prophets and no outstanding personalities to whom we should instinctively give that name. But the faculty, in more or less developed form, is inherent in man, and at no time has its secret, diffused power and working being more manifest than now. Men believe, with prophets and apostles, that the good is going to win. They will perhaps express it as Fiske, the American, expresses it : " Man is slowly passing from a primitive social state, in which he was little better than the brute, towards an ultimate social state in which his character shall be so transformed that nothing of the brute can be detected in it." Scepticism, materialism, atheism will strive in vain against the prophet element in man. It is in the sceptics themselves. Le Bon, speaking of the Paris workman, says : " His raillery is never directed against religion as a belief, but at the clergy, whom he considers a branch of the Government." It was so at the time of the Revolution, in all its orgy of free thinking and free doing. The Jacobin Hebert told the people to read the Gospels, the best of all books of morality. Helvetius, while attacking the priests, declared the religion of Christ to be "*douce et tolérante.*" Beneath all the questionings, the confusions of the intellect, all the turbulence of

passion, lies man's mystic element, his prophet faculty, his soul ; the soul, as insistent in its message to-day as when Tertullian wrote of it : " Wherever the soul comes to itself, as out of a surfeit, or a sleep, or a sickness, and attains something of its natural soundness, it speaks of God."

We are full of prophecy to-day, and of the best kind. There lies in the hearts of men everywhere the portent of a mighty change, the change from national enmity and suspicion to a new feeling of mutual amity and trust. The war-makers, the war-mongers realise it, and are ill at ease. Their craft is in danger. The trade in which they have enriched themselves ; the trade in hatred, suspicion and fear, in the brutal instincts of men, in the false glories hitherto attached to conquest and slaughter—all this is to-day shaking and trembling as though an earthquake moved beneath it. A new thought has entered men's minds. This colossal weight of armaments, which is crushing down our civilisation ; what, men are asking, has created it all ? It is a thought that has created it ; just a thought and a bad one. Put a good thought in its place and the incubus will disappear. That good thought is now in process of incubation. By and by it will emerge in its full strength, and we shall see wonders. The world is trying the power of faith, and already it is moving mountains. One nation trusts another with its money ; trusts all races and colours of people with it, and finds the trust justified. Now men are saying : " Why not trust a little farther, credit these peoples with the common sense, with the good feeling, which settles difficulties by reason instead of by daggers, and which pronounces

definitely and once for all against the cut-throat, robber cult of the barbarous ages?" This faith, too, will justify itself. The great prophecy will be realised. That, because it is founded on a sure thing, on the ever-developing nature of the good, on its ultimate victory over all that opposes.

That man is formed for the future, that the very structure and shape of his soul points and urges him onward, is perhaps the surest of all pledges about his future. Our faculties will find what they seek, what they seem made for. The eye finds light, the ear finds sound, the hand the thousand things that match its activities. And man's prophetic element, as it develops, as it clears itself from the falsities which tempt its cruder efforts, as it learns its true nature and its true direction, will become more and more a pointer of the way. It will discriminate between the sure things and the things not sure. It will predict out of its estimate of values. Its instinct will be more and more fixed upon the eternal, the everlasting. And the promise enshrined in it will not fail, for it is in itself the earnest of an eternal possession.

IX

THE DEVIL'S TOLL

We borrow the phrase from an old writer, who uses it to express what he believed to be the fact, that from all our transactions, from our gains, from our virtues even, the devil takes a rebate, his own especial discount. The aforesaid writer believed in the devil; and why should he not? This is a queer universe, with some queer people in it, as our own corner of it can bear testimony. We have some very bad specimens here, and there may be bad specimens elsewhere. To create a moral realm of free-will was a hazardous cosmic experiment; its great results have been obtained at the expense of some failures, and there may be more of these than we wot of. Who shall say that the invisible world, like our visible one, may not have its *mauvais sujets*, with a leader of them, pre-eminent in badness? And who shall say that, as we—by influence, contagion, infection, or whatever you call it—communicate our goodness and our badness to our fellows, there may not be unseen personalities who act in like manner upon each other and upon us? Controversy apart, we have the "devil," at least as a word in our vocabulary, a much used and a most effective word. Take it as you will—for a principle of evil, for the fly in our moral ointment, for the inferior, the bad, as opposed to the good. Our

theme will work itself out under any of these definitions. There is a something quite near enough to us which we have to be "up against," to resist and to fight, if we are to come to any good. We can accept a devil, as the late William Jones used to say, if only we keep our foot on his neck. Let us hope that if there be a personality of that name he will, as Robbie Burns has it, some day "tak' a thought and mend." The fact remains—the thing we have here to consider—that our adversary does take his toll; that all our good doing and good being is subject to a horrible discount; that our best, even in the hour of its victory, pays tribute to our worst; that our forward movement includes those manifold slips backward; that our success carries in it so often the seeds of defeat. It seems hardly an exhilarating subject, but it is a real one, and the real, in all its phases, is our truest business. And the conclusion of it may turn out, after all, to be anything but a pessimistic one.

The illustrations of the theme are all around us. Take, for instance, the recent Balkan business. How exultant, how full of hope were we all, a little while ago, in watching it! These brave young peoples, who had at last found themselves, their manhood, their moral strength, at grips with the barbaric power that had enslaved them for centuries! How we hailed the heroism which in the fight for freedom flung itself on the giant foe, braving death and wounds in the struggle for independence! Here was a new dawn, the opening of a glorious future! And then all this seemed spoiled and lost. These brothers-in-arms, in the moment of victory, turn their arms against each other. In winning against the enemy

they have lost themselves. The aspiration for liberty has become a lust for plunder; their hatred for slavery has become a hate of each other. We call back our praises; we turn in disgust from this hideous fratricide. It is the story of the French Revolution over again. How glorious was the beginning of that great uprising! The events of 1789 sent all the noble spirits of Europe mad with joy. Our English poets, Byron, Keats, Shelley, Wordsworth, burst into exultant pæans. Of that time Wordsworth wrote:

> Bliss were it in that dawn to be alive,
> And to be young were very heaven.

Then came the devil's discount; the horrors of '91 and '93. The noyades, the massacres of the Conciergerie, of the Abbaye, the orgies of the guillotine, the fiendish atrocities of a St. Just, of a Marat, of a Robespierre. The sunshine seemed all gone; the optimists became pessimists. But let us remember here what followed; remember it for our comfort. The toll was indeed heavy, but it did not exhaust the capital; it left it indeed almost untouched. The French Revolution remained, and remains, one of the greatest events in history. The atrocities are over but the good abides. After all, it was a stroke for liberty, for human emancipation. It was the abolition of serfdom, the creation of millions of peasant proprietors, the advent into the world of a new spirit, the notice to quit to a thousand hateful tyrannies. And what happened then, be sure, will happen again. In South Eastern Europe the toll is being paid; but it will not exhaust the capital. These people are mad to-day, but they will not always be mad. No good once won is

ever finally lost. For the folly, the savagery, of the hour the full price will be paid. And the payment will be in itself an enduring lesson. What has happened shows us exactly where these people are in their moral development. They have a long row to hoe. We have had to abate our hopes concerning them. But the world's whole history shows us how absurd it would be to cease to hope.

Where humanity so far has had to pay toll arises, we see, from the fact that so many of its perfections have been limited ones. The win has been for a class, a caste, instead of one for the whole. The Athenian civilisation, with all its splendours, was built on slavery. Beneath its triumphs of art and literature was the groaning mass of the unenfranchised. The life of French society before '89, with its salons, its circle of intellectuals, its life of cultured ease, of polished epigram ; the life pictured for us in the memoirs of Voltaire, of Diderot, of Mlle. de l'Espinasse, was almost perfect in its way. Talleyrand said of it that no one could realise how charming existence could be who had not known it before the catastrophe of the Revolution. Ah, if it could have been charming for everybody ! But it was bought at too high a price ; the price of the blood and tears of a nation. In England, in the time of the Georges, the men of fashion, the landed proprietors, had a great time and produced some brilliant men. It was a time when we won half the world and dominated the rest. Horace Walpole, in Chatham's days, speaks of looking out each morning when he got up for news of the latest victory. But all England was not in those days either glorious or conquering. Those were the days of the Commons

Enclosure Acts. If our readers would learn of them let them study "The English Labourer, 1760 to 1830," by the Hammonds, where they will find how the once prosperous workers of the countryside were despoiled of their lands, of their ancient rights, of their economic freedoms, and reduced to what M. de Laboulaye has described as the most forlorn condition of all European toilers. Here again the devil's price was so abominably high, and he got it all!

To come to more intimate and personal matters. Here every man of us can be seen paying his dues. They are sliced off from his life-earnings as neatly and as surely as though they were dividend warrants mulcted of the income-tax. Our winnings in one direction seem always to mean losings in another. A man's gifts pay toll. The genius is notorious for his onesidedness, for his grave defects in given directions. We read of the *genus irritabile vatum*. We think of a Coleridge, a De Quincey, drugging themselves with opium. Du Maurier, in his picture of Svengali in "Trilby," gives us a glorious musician who is a scoundrel in all the rest of him. Lady Troubridge, in one of her novels, declares roundly that musicians are not to be trusted in matters of morality. Certainly some of the greatest of them have been queer moralists. And apart from open immorality, what an irony it is when some high-strung nature, exercised in his study with the highest themes in life and religion, comes away exhausted by his efforts in idealism, with nerves all ajar, and has nothing but ill-temper to offer to his wife or his friends! How the infernal powers laugh when the preacher, after discoursing eloquently of humility,

comes away puffed up with his performance! A famous preacher, and, moreover, a very excellent man, on coming down once from his pulpit was met by an admiring auditor with eulogies on the grand discourse he had delivered. "Ah!" was the reply, "the devil has told me all that already!"

What a book could be written on "The Sins of the Saints," on the bad side of spirituality! It is one of the most disturbing reflections, that of the evil wrought by good men. They were such earnest theologians, so absorbingly eager for the true faith, those starters of religious persecutions, those founders of the Inquisition! In the interests of "the truth" so many of them had started to tell lies! What a phase of religious human nature is that exhibited by the history of pious frauds, of winking Madonnas, of the wholesale manufacture of sacred relics! There has been enough wood of the true cross distributed over Christendom to build a suburb. Writers of the later Judaism and of early Christianity did not hesitate to ascribe their works to the authorship of Moses, of Enoch, of the Patriarchs. Their own authority was not good enough; they therefore borrowed these great names without scruple and as a pious act. We are amazed to find so good a man as Jerome coolly writing as follows to a friend: "The less the people comprehend, the more it is edified. Thus our Fathers and Doctors have often written not what they thought, but what circumstances and the needs of the time made them say." In the supposed interests of faith men have shut their eyes to the plainest evidence. They have, as Höffding says, "believed the impossible in order to save the necessary." There is a story of Keble, in an

argument with Buckland, maintaining that the fossils found in the geologic strata were put there by the special act of God. The good Melancthon stormed against the Copernican theory as contrary to religion. Zeal for what they thought the Gospel has led men into the strangest courses. We read of a learned man like Carlstadt, in the heat of the Reformation time, declaring at Wittenburg that there was no need of academies and learning; and of George Mohr, rector of the grammar school, telling the people to take their children from the school, for there was no need of study henceforth. Had they not among them the divine prophets of Zwickau, Storch, Thoma and Stübner, who were filled with the Spirit, without any study? And in our own day how often have we seen the Church, or sections of it, arraying its hosts against research, when the results of it seemed to contradict some theological assumption! Everywhere we see our poor humanity, even in the highest exercises of its spirit, paying its toll to the inferior powers; side by side with its heroism, its sacrifices, its noble devotion, exhibiting its fears, its ignorance, its prejudice, its want of the highest faith of all—the trust in truth as the one revelation of God.

What perversity is it in us that leads us so persistently to spoil our good things? Take the question of our fellowships, of our human intercourse. Our first impulses here are so genuine, so wholesome. Our fellow men are dear to us. There is nothing so interesting as a human face. In the city we are too hurried, too crowded for the true valuation of our kind. But in the country, where men are scarce, we have our crack with the labourer in the field, with the tramp on the road. The child's

face on the doorstep is a benediction. And where friend meets friend round the table, at the fireside, in some special coterie, the soul expands to its full dimensions, overflows with all that is best in it. And yet even here what an enormous, what a shameful toll do we pay to the devil! What unblessed tongue was it that invented detraction? Think of that villainous word, backbiting! That when a man's back is turned shall be the moment when we think more meanly of him and speak less cordially of him than when we looked him in the face! That all this is a falsity, both to him and our true self, is evidenced by the fact that in the actual presence of the man, when his eye meets ours, when his hand clasps ours, our feeling for him, our appreciation of him, is so different, so much higher. Nowhere surely does the inner training of the spirit show more carelessness, more lack of honest thoroughness, than here. This is a baseness we never ought to permit ourselves. The thing begins in our thought, and it is our thought that we need to take more thoroughly in hand. It is a reptile instinct—truly a bit of the old serpent in us; and the first appearance of its ugly head in our consciousness should be stamped on with iron heel. What we feel towards a man when we talk to him, let us have nothing baser in us when we think of him. To this devil's toll, as indeed, to all the others, we may apply with entire accordance the maxim of Ancient Pistol—otherwise so queer a moralist—"base is the slave who pays!"

There is another department, of vital importance to humanity, in which a heavy toll has gone the wrong way. It is that of the exercise of spiritual influence. Here is one of the great problems of the Church, and

especially of its appointed teachers and emissaries—the problem of the evangelist, of the preacher. Rightly considered, there is no higher function than that; no, and none more delicate, none where one may more easily go wrong. To persuade men to the acceptance of life's best; to inspire them with the sublime vision of God, the soul, and immortality; to win the drunkard from his cups, the libertine from his vices; to help in the fight against greed and selfishness and base passion; to infect a population with the enthusiasm of goodness, what higher art, what sublimer husbandry, than this? But in this high business comes the danger. The work is to cultivate the soul; the actual practice too often has been to crush it. The business is to help men to develop themselves; the temptation is to swamp them under one's own egotism. Instead of aiming to strengthen the individual judgment so that it may itself see truth, of strengthening the individual will that it may form its own firm decisions; behold, the priest arrogating to himself all right of vision, all exercise of the judgment and the will! He must swell, if the people dwindle. To increase his own vision-value he must close the layman's eye. Amongst a community of the lame and the blind the man who can see and can walk has become all-important. Ecclesiasticism has never yet been able to get away from that view of things and the line of procedure which it suggests. Says M. Loisy, of the Roman Church: "One cannot deny that the tendency of Catholicism in the reaction against Protestantism has been towards the effacement of the individual, to place man under tutelage, to the control of all his activities in a way which does not

help initiative. Its rock is to want too much to govern men, in place of elevating souls."

Rome has undoubtedly shown this tendency in its most extreme form. Of all the churches it has paid the largest toll to the baser instinct of domination. But Protestantism has not escaped. In its communions it has been the ever-dodging peril of powerful personalities—preachers, theologians—to impose their own personality with crushing and annihilating force upon the minds, the souls, of the timid and the weak. Freedom with them was to be *their* freedom, not that of their hearers. To be eyes to the blind is all very well. But so much better to heal the blind, to help them to see for themselves! A crucial instance of what we mean—one of those extreme cases which show in its full proportions what the danger is—is given us in the life of Alice, the wife of Laurence Oliphant, in her relations with Harris, the American prophet of the new life. Says she, describing those relations: "One only thing has been a terrible pang to me, the giving over of my own judgment, in questions of moral judgment, to any human authority. It is so absolutely new and incomprehensible an idea to me, that any other testimony should supplant, without risk to itself and me, the inner test of my actions that my conscience affords." "New and incomprehensible"! Alas, neither new nor incomprehensible. It is an old, old story of the triumph of the priestly instinct, first in the teacher himself, and then in the pupil who became his victim. Yet, what a monstrous story! This delicate, high-strung, essentially noble nature, overcrowed and overawed by the dominating egotism of this masterful spirit, until her own judgment and

reason, all the formative forces of character, are to lie crushed and broken beneath his heel. But the danger here is in all of us who aspire to teach. Without a resolute repression, without a sunbright clearness of view as to the limits of legitimate influence, we, too, may become that ; may have it truly said of us : "*de te fabula narratur.*" When we are using our power, not to develop but to repress it in others ; when our aim is that all whom we reach shall take our mould instead of their own ; when we reinforce our own will by sucking the life blood of theirs ; surely then to all the tolls that enrich the infernal revenues, we are making the most valued contribution !

Assuredly the human education is as yet a long way from being complete. To put it otherwise, we are an overtaxed race. We are paying too much to the wrong custom house. Or, to put it still otherwise, we are a wasteful race. In the production of our perfections, of our virtues, we act too much in the way of the old, unscientific manufacturers, whose processes left an enormous amount of ugly, waste material—slag heaps which made the landscape hideous. Science is, in these matters, reaching a better method, where nothing is regarded as waste ; where the whole material is brought into useful, beautiful service. And that is what, in man's spiritual culture, we have to aim at, and what, in the end, will be attained. We have to learn to achieve success without pride ; we have to achieve a civilisation where the prosperity, the joy of life, shall be the privilege, not of one class, but of all. We have to learn that our gifts, however brilliant, are nothing in the scale against character, against goodness. We have to reach a theory and practice of

social intercourse where all the freshness, the generosity of it is to be guarded in our earnest thought, as a precious mixture, to be soiled by no malign admixture. Our aim must be for a spiritual influence which helps but never seeks to dominate, which respects the freedom of the will as God's greatest gift to the soul. And all this and more will yet be accomplished. This, because God is at work in His world, visibly, before our eyes, moving towards His great purpose. When we have fully caught His spirit, been saturated with His fulness, we shall pay no more toll to the devil.

X

THE PRICE

"PRICE" is one of the best-used words in the language. It is one of those, too, that reach deepest. The street urchin knows it, turning over the half-penny in his pocket. It meets us in every shop window; it is bawled from every huckster's stall; it rings through all the world's exchanges. Every morning our newspaper has among its headlines, "Current Prices," "The Price of Gold," a long following list of figures which means this one thing. "Every man has his price," said once Sir Robert Walpole, with a sinister significance. It is true in a better sense than this; and he might have added, "Everything has its price." We have never yet come to any agreement as to what the price is, what it should be. In some directions, it is true, we have made vast advances. It was an epoch in the history of man the trader when he hit upon coinage as a common denominator, a recognised medium of exchange. What a puzzle was business before that day! How were you to hit on an exact equivalent of value, when the question was between exchanging so many sheep for so many bullocks, or to swap a slave for a suit of clothes? Money has enormously facilitated exchange; but even here we have by no means struck an absolute value

estimate. The production of gold makes a constant variation in its price, and so in the price of other things. As gold becomes cheap all else becomes dear. And there are other variants. The present writer, in Turkey during the war with Russia, found the money-changers in the streets of Constantinople busy with curious transactions. The Government was easing its own financial strain by pouring out from its printing-presses daily issues of paper. As a consequence, the value of paper money varied every morning with the amount on the market. It reached finally about one-fifth that of hard money—a thing one had to remember when making purchases !

To-day—and outside Turkey—our value systems are full of artificialities. A rich man's wealth consists of some bundles of paper, which he perhaps never sees, lying in a bank's strong-room. Bonds, shares, debentures, deeds, printed in various languages, with some signatures scrawled at the bottom, so much paper and ink, which a five minutes' blaze would effectually destroy. If he lost them he would be beggared. But is this wealth ? Is the gold for which they could be exchanged wealth ? For one thing, there is not gold enough in the world to redeem half the paper that is afloat. Neither one nor the other is the real thing. If all the gold and all the paper securities in existence were destroyed to-morrow, the world would be very little poorer. These values are simply representative. They are the signs of something behind. Your railway shares are not wealth. The wealth is the railway. Your Chinese bonds are worth what they are because they stand for China ; its labourers'

toil, its harvests, its resources above and beneath the ground.

And your solidest values, when you have got them there in hand, how they vary! To a man dying of thirst in the Sahara Desert you offer a bag of diamonds, or a flask of water and a lift in your caravan. Which will he prefer? Diamonds are cheap for him at that moment. The multi-millionaire going down in the *Titanic* would offer most of his wealth for a boat. Would he give it for a place in a boat if that meant the displacement of another, of a woman? Ah, there comes another question of value, another matter of price! Here we are getting deeper. Here we are asking whether life itself is worth the price of honour; whether a continued consciousness on this earth, dogged for ever with a sense of failure in life's highest, is as good as that one great moment of losing it in the interest of the highest? Can we ever despair of humanity when we remember in what innumerable instances, amongst its commonest specimens—colliers throwing themselves away in the effort to save a comrade, rough fishermen manning the lifeboat in the teeth of the gale, Atkins, with bullets raining round him, carrying his wounded officer back to the line of safety—how the common man has risen to this height of sacrifice, preferring, as Aristotle puts it, " to accomplish one great and noble deed rather than many small ones " !

To pay the price. It is one of the deepest laws of life. All nature's transactions with us are on this basis. *Do ut des*, the maxim which Bismarck was so fond of quoting, " I give that you may give," is the cosmic motto. Up to a point we seem to have

things gratis ; nature is so boundless in her generosities. We pay no toll for her sunshine, her fresh air, the splendid pictures she paints on the skies, that she composes out of her valleys, her mountains.

She presents us with life itself ; with our bodies and minds ; with all the wonder of bone and muscle, of eye and ear, of memory, imagination, the whole faculty of thought. She has given us the world in fee. And yet observe the limit. Before any of these things become useful to us we have to put in something of our own. The ancients worshipped Ceres, the fertiliser, the goddess of harvests. But they got no harvests ready made. To air and sun, to the rich qualities of the soil, they must yoke their own wit and toil ; must plough and sow, must thresh and reap, must grind and bake and brew before they ate and drank. All the gifts were half gifts ; never a something for nothing.

For our human life we must pay—ourselves and others. To come into the world cost our mother her birth pangs. For long years our growth and maintenance meant the toil and care of our parents. And this great heritage we have come into—of civilisation, of knowledge, of religion, of freedom—have we thought of all that has cost ? Not an invention but someone has given his best, often his life, for it ; our freedom is blood-bought. The right to think for ourselves, to worship according to our conscience, has meant the heretic's obloquy, the martyr's fires, all endured by the brave generations before us. Our very eating and drinking is at the price of human beginners who ventured deadly experiments in the discovery of what was

good to eat and drink. Here is a debt to start with ; a debt we can never pay off ; which no one worth his salt will carry comfortably except as he manfully does his stroke for the general weal ; adds something of value to the heritage of his successors. The doctrine of vicarious sacrifice, of the doing and suffering of one for another, is writ in the heart of the universe, in letters of blood and fire. Christianity has that blood-red cosmic signature upon it ; it builds itself upon a Cross.

But observe that this law of vicarious sacrifice, which we find everywhere in life, while it goes a certain way, never goes the whole way. The so much done, so much borne for us, leaves always the final, decisive thing to be done, to be borne by ourselves. To be human on the present scale of the human, has meant, we have said, the paying of so big a price by others. But there is also the price *we* pay. To be human, on our scale, has meant first the lodging of our spirit in a bodily structure, the most wonderful instrument in the world. Have you ever studied it ? Everyone should read carefully some good book on human physiology—there is no finer than Huxley's—if only to know this part of what it means to be alive. Study the mechanism of the eye, of the ear, of the digestive apparatus, of one hair of your head. Study, above all, the brain and the nervous system. Was there ever such a machine ? It is computed that there are some 20,000 billion cells in the whole organism ; every one of them a unit, and all working together in a perfect co-ordination. Was there ever such an exquisite fineness of texture, a lacework so delicately woven ! And the result is to give us such a range of sensations, such a

play of feeling and sensibility as nothing else in the animal world can touch. And behind that is the mind itself, with all its infinite sweep of thought, of knowledge, of affection, and aspiration. But all this at a price. Against this higher apparatus of noble feeling, the possibility of the acuter pains. The animal, which knows nothing of our joys, knows nothing also of our sorrows. The sluggish brute nerve, which is incapable of our exquisite thrills, is also insensible to the acuter agonies we may know. The animal has some pangs of separation; it has its moment of death. But how faint and feeble its sense of bereavement compared with ours! And death to it is nothing throughout its life, a consideration that never enters. To us death, in our later years, is the inseparable companion, the ever haunting shadow. Our height of being pays its price. But we pay it willingly, do we not? Would one of us exchange our human status, with all its cost, for the lower one? A thousand times, no! We would go higher yet, with all the risks that entails. And this because we are learning that other lesson of the price; the lesson that what we pay is into a good exchequer; that our trial and suffering is no waste product, but comes back in the grandest of returns.

A giving which is always a half-gift; a vicarious sacrifice which goes half the way; a payment on one side which always demands a payment on your side. This, we see, is nature's lesson, her law of life. She has made this so unmistakably plain to us; has printed it in so clear a type, that it is a perversity which amounts to wickedness if we fail to use the lesson in our interpretation of religion, in our inter-

pretation of the religious deeps of the Christian Gospel. For the grace of God in Christ Jesus is always on the line of the grace revealed in nature. Here again it is *do ut des*. It is so in Christ's great gift of Himself, in His suffering love for us, in His atonement. Antinomianism, in all its forms, is Christ's Gospel with the devil as interpreter; the lie which arose in Paul's time, and which drew from him the indignant exclamation, "What, shall we sin that grace may abound?" What a perversity has been that use of the doctrine of imputed righteousness which makes God regard us as other than we are, and treat us as though we were somebody else, because of what some other has done for us; a doctrine of simulation and make believe! On this we may well remember Coleridge's remarks in his "Aids to Reflection." He imagines a bad, loveless son who has repaid his mother's affection by a total neglect. Another steps in and performs all those duties of love and service instead of the son. "Would that," he asks, "be a reason for the mother's loving that son?" Says she: "Must not the sense of the other's goodness teach me more vividly to feel the evil in my son?" Redemption, be sure, means no obliquity, no round-the-corner business of this sort. God deals with us at first hand, not at second hand. Christ's work for us and in us is to help our personality, not to obliterate it; to get us back to our true self, not to substitute another for it. Vicarious, yes; it all begins there. The beginning is all grace, as the sun's shining is all grace. But it is a grace which does not insult us. It will not save us by ignoring what we are and what we have been. It says to us: "Yes, you are the object of vicarious

sacrifice. Others have suffered for you. Christ has suffered for you. But that is not to spare you your own suffering; you will bear all that, for only thus could you become the person you are to be. You, too, must pay your price, and Christ has shown you how to do it."

Notwithstanding all that has been done for us, we go on paying the price. And the eternal question presses us, "Is the price too high? Is what we are getting worth what we are paying for it?" The biggest prices here are such as are not quoted in the market. There is no visible transaction. It is all an exchange in the soul. Take the price of pride. The main form of it to-day is purse pride. A man accumulates houses, lands, broad possessions, and swells inwardly to the dimensions of all that. He is, he thinks, as big as his holding. A clearer view sees otherwise; finds the best part of him to be dwindling, dwindling. About this a writer of ages ago, when the world was mad with the same fever, has a word on it which we moderns might well study. Says Longinus: "I try to reckon up, but I cannot discover how it is possible that we, who so greatly honour boundless wealth; who, to speak more truly, make it a god, can fail to receive into our souls the kindred evils which enter with it. . . . Men will no longer take any account of good reputations. Little by little the ruin of their whole life is affected; all greatness of soul dwindles and withers, and ceases to be emulated, while men admire their own mortal parts, and neglect to improve the immortal." The market price here seems to have been very little affected by the course of the ages. Men buy now, as in the days of Longinus, the

same thing at the same figure. And what is it they buy? Is pride a good value? It reduces a man to beggary—that, amid all his show, his riches. Your proud man is a mendicant all the time. You can see his soul going in hand to every onlooker, to every dependant, to every passer-by, asking for its daily, hourly aliment. It asks for, implores, the admiring look, the flattering word, the tribute of these outsiders to its own imperious hunger of vanity. Without that tribute constantly administered it starves. And what is this beggar soul doing with its fellows? Sowing amongst them crops of envy, of base subservience, of all the mean and miserable emotions. With its own territory a wilderness, it is making a spiritual wilderness all round. If only these people had a glimpse of imagination, to see what they were doing, for themselves and for all the others! If only they had one touch of humour—that saving grace! We are not saying that all rich men are proud, are of this sort. Far from it. There are who have won their wealth by pluck and enterprise, and who are doing their best with it. But the thing itself is so horrible a temptation to mean spirits and there are so many mean rich men. What we want here to say is, that the things really worth the price, worth any price we can offer, are not the things we have spoken of; not envies and subserviencies and vulgar admirations; not the lifting of ourselves on the abasement of others. To gain the honest love of our fellows, by our own honest love for them; a love which shows in our frank, humble recognition of their worth—the worth of the meanest of them—which shows in genuine service for their betterment; a love which is not satisfied till

we have shared with our fellows the best in us, and which leaves behind it an example to be followed, a memory to be revered—these, and these only, are the values that are worth their price.

To have grasped this law of the price is to have grasped the meaning of Christ, of His living and His dying. It is the heart of Christianity. To be a Christian, in the only real sense, is to live in the the daily consciousness of all that is involved in this question of price. It will make us so eager for the true values, so indifferent to all else. When we remember that all we have is at the cost of some others, of their labour, often of their pain, how deep will be our gratitude to them ; how eager our desire to repay ! This feeling will make us angry with much of our civilisation. So many of our fellows are paying too much. When our newspapers tell us, as they did the other day, of a poor girl in London dying of starvation, and of her room mate, called as a witness, telling how she herself had for months been out of employment, living on dry bread and tea, dismissed from her work because—made ill by the stifling atmosphere of the underground room she was working in—she had asked for a brief respite and a breath of air, we find ourselves in deadly revolt against the system which permits it. Have we any business, any of us, to be happy in an England which, steeped in the luxury of its comfortable classes, permits such conditions at our doors ; conditions compared with which the savagedom of Central Africa is a paradise ? The revolution we are waiting for, the revolution which will come when we have become Christian, will break out among the rich, in their fierce revolt against their own luxury while their

brethren can thus die of starvation and nakedness. When we have become Christian we shall want to pay the price, the old redemption price, the price He paid, "who being rich for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich."

XI

FACES

Lamb thought faces the finest scenery. He writes to Wordsworth that "separate from the pleasure of your company, I don't much care if I never see a mountain in my life." He speaks elsewhere of the "human faces without which the finest scenery failed to satisfy his sense of beauty." Assuredly, nowhere else in the heavens or the earth have we so vivid a picture as is offered us in the human face. In those few inches of surface what a concentration of power, what a mingling of matter and of mind! The face is the soul's window through which it looks out on the world; through which the world in its turn reads the soul's own secret. Think of the collection of faculty massed in that tiny oval! Underneath, in chest and limbs, is the machinery of life; here, on the countenance, is life itself. Its flesh is charged with spirit. The eye, which gives us the universe to farthest worlds; the ear, with all that music means, with all that spoken language means; the mouth, the gateway of our food and drink, of the air we breathe, the organ of speech; our sense of smell, and the whole world of scents and perfumes; all this and so much more, built into that one tiny bit of space! Every inch of it a revelation. What volumes the eye tells! The nose, the mouth, the

chin, all deciders of destiny. You will see a nose that tells everything; a conquering nose, that of a Cæsar, a Wellington, that will crash through a world; the weak, boneless one, sign of the nothing the man is. And so with a mouth, a chin. All we are, all we have been, and all we have done, carries itself here in a thousand subtle lines, a myriad touches of the artist who is painting us. Odd, is it not, that while we so carefully shield the rest of our body, by a whole strata of clothing, from the cold and damp, that this part of us, infinitely the most delicate and sensitive of all, with nerves so immeasurably finer, nerves whose exquisite texture record every minutest change and shade of expression; that this, the body's supreme nerve centre, should be left open by us to every wind that blows. Clothing, after all, is largely a convention. The best bit of us does without it.

There is one feature in the face, considered as a piece of nature's artistry, which, as we think of it, makes us doubtful of one at least of Ruskin's dicta in the matter of architecture. We remember his abhorrence of stucco. He denounces it as a hypocrisy. He will have his surfaces represent the actual material of the structure. Away with all falsities, with all that hides and misrepresents the thing beneath! But, after all, is he following nature here? Is that her way? What would happen to our beauty if we peeled off from the face its surface covering? The thought is not a pleasant one. Nature is not Ruskinian here. Is she, indeed, anywhere? She has no scruples about her surfaces. Her Matterhorn is the same thing through and through, except where snow and ice cover it, but the

mass of her landscape effects are thin coverings, that hide something far less beautiful beneath. Strip that surface layer, and we should have a very ugly world to look upon. But that is an aside.

We have spoken of the human face as the greatest of pictures. Some great artists are constantly engaged upon it. Let us define. There are professional ladies and gentlemen in Bond Street and elsewhere who lay claim to this title, but we are not thinking of them. Certainly they are in a way proficients in face architecture. With their paints and powders, their dyes and pincers, their nose machines, and other instruments of the outfit, they achieve miracles, masterpieces; annihilate the years, and offer *ætat.* fifty the suggestion of twenty-five. It is an old art, one of the oldest in the world. Babylon and Egypt were proficient in it. There is a curious chapter in Clement of Alexandria where he describes the manner of "making up" amongst the Alexandrian ladies of his time. Evidently the second century could, in these mysteries, give points to the twentieth. But, alas! nature does not smile on these methods; or, if she does, her smile has too much sarcasm in it. She regards them as a peddling trade. What worth they are, how far they go, is known to the lady's maid, who visits her mistress in the morning.

Nature has a face architecture of another kind—august, venerable, sometimes terrible. Her instruments are time and the will; the events that happen to a man; the million million volitions which spring from and react on the character. The great graving tool is the soul itself. The other day it fell to the writer to meet some friends of his boyhood; once

familiar figures whom he had not seen for fifty years. Here, indeed, was genuine work, fateful work. What a product of time and the hours ; the once lithe forms bowed and stiffened ; the once smooth, eager faces covered with wrinkles ; eyes, speech, expression, how changed, transformed ! All the varied scenes of life, all the experiences gone through ; the lifting joys, the poignant sorrow ; all the secret thoughts of the heart, had left here each their mark ; all had wrought on the plastic material and made this new, strange, unrecognisable picture. " I should not have known you," was on each side the startled expression. One felt here the solemnity, the tragedy of living ; how each of us is adrift on the current that carries us all away.

Yet the study of the face is not wholly a sombre one. It offers one of the greatest of revelations. It shows us the profound spirituality of nature. We see here how it conquers and refines matter, how it transfuses it with the highest things of the soul. Look into the face of some noble character, some inspired leader of men. Observe its strength, its beauty, its sweetness. It was not always like that. The new born child was a mere pulpy mass, from which you could divine nothing. But through the years, since the soul awoke, since character began to form, and to make its great decisions, the inner wealth of the spirit has been flowing out upon the features, moulding, transforming them, pouring into their flesh and blood all the beauty of its secret life. Here thought has materialised and matter has been spiritualised. In this action of the soul upon the face, do we not catch a glimpse of what is going on in the universe ? Have we not here in this

selected bit of matter an image, a prophecy, of what the whole world, nature's utmost realm, is yet to become? The cosmos is also being spiritualised; its rude chaotic mass is being wrought on from within, and is yet to be the triumph of thought, through its utmost borders to be made beautiful, by the soul that is within it!

There has been in our world one face where, we may well believe, the spiritualisation of matter reached its height. We have had innumerable pictures of the face of Christ. The masters have filled with it the art galleries of the world. It decorates the palaces of kings, the rude walls of the peasant's home. And yet we have no authentic knowledge of it. The early Christian writers, the Church Fathers, are all abroad in their accounts. Justin Martyr says, "He appeared without beauty;" Clement of Alexandria, "He passed through the world unlovely in the flesh and without form, thereby teaching us to look at the unseen and the incorporate;" and that "He used a commonplace form of body," and "was base in aspect." Tertullian has it that "His body was devoid not only of heavenly lustre, but also of human nobleness, and that He was not even pleasing in appearance." Jerome, on the contrary, declares that "there was something starry in His appearance"; while Augustine speaks of Him as "beautiful as an infant; beautiful on earth, beautiful in heaven." It is evident we can attach no authority to any of these utterances. They are dictated by theological considerations. The first cited conform to the prophetic word that He should be "a root out of a dry ground, without form or comeliness." The latter view is also

theological, and not less unhistorical. It is better here to found ourselves on nature and her processes. We know not what the features were. One thing we may be sure of; that great soul could not fail to impress itself, its nobleness, its purity, on the fleshy envelope. The Transfiguration story is the story of a life, as well as of a moment. That face—the face which, as Browning has it, "far from vanish, grows. . . . becomes our universe that feels and knows"; the face in which, as men looked on it, they found their rest-giver, their burden-bearer, whose smile drew them from the tax-gatherer's custom-house, from the fisherman's boat—carried its own revelation. The peace, the power, the loveliness within, mirrored themselves there.

The painters, ancient and modern, have concentrated their powers on the human face. Nothing elsewhere so subtle, so difficult, so wonderful. The face of nature at her sublimest, her weirdest, in all the variety of her moods, has no such power of line. Yet there is a greater art than that of portrait painting, one to which the best mind of the world is learning to devote itself. It is that of a new face-creation. So long the human countenance has been, in the mass of examples, only a parody of what it might be. Such a host of malign artists have been at work there. Fear, anguish, remorse, lust, cunning, despair have, through ages and ages, written themselves on its features. So many canvases, ready for beauty to imprint itself on them, and now all ugly with the wreck of character, with the marks of bestial passion! Think of what that base animal painter, drink, is doing in our land. The other day, sitting in a country house in rural England, we

heard the story of some immediate neighbours. A couple of hundred yards off was a noble mansion, deserted, falling into decay. Its owner, a Ceylon planter, had died there two years ago—of drink. He left the house and adjoining property to his brother. In a few months he, too, had passed away, also a drink victim. In the village street, which we saw from the window, stood a large red-brick house. It was the property, we were told, of a wealthy woman who lived alone there, drinking herself to death. It had been left her by her brother, who in mid-life had died of drink. Their father was a drunkard. Here was the history of an acre or two of ground. Is it an exceptional history? Such stories are everywhere; the stories of every village, of every town, of every street. Here is the python that is strangling us; here is the demon artist that is smearing human faces with its fiery hue, the hue of death. Are we fatalists, that we submit to it so easily?

There is no fatalism here, but only want of will and an organisation of the nation's common goodness, united to its common sense. Let us not talk of the fatalism of heredity; of the face's fatalism. At first sight it would seem as though everything were fixed there; that the face was a finality. When you see the puffed cheek, the hanging jaw, the sensuous mouth, you say, "Here is destiny; there is no escape from such features. This man is and will be what he is; and he will transmit his ugly self to his children." Assuredly, it looks almost a finality; but it is not. The bottom fact to remember here is that it is not feature that creates character, but character that creates feature. Change a man's heart and you will begin to change his face. There are creative

forces here, which we may call to our aid, that are stronger than heredity. You need not read Weissmann to be assured of that. The history of slum children, the offspring of vice and degradation, taken out of these surroundings and put in a wholesome physical and moral environment, is a proof of it. That history is one of marvels, one of the most hopeful things in the world. You get eighty per cent. of them, who have begun so badly, turning out well. The human character is the most plastic thing. We know, alas! what evil can make of it. But we know, also, thank heaven, what good can make of it, and we have powers of good around us that we will wager against all the powers of evil. With that power scientifically organised we can fight drink and all the seven devils that afflict us, and fight to win. What a manufacture is here before us; the manufacture of good, beautiful faces, index of beautiful souls! Faces from which have been banished the dread lineaments which guilt and fear and base passion have written there, and which, as we look upon them, shall make us exclaim with Miranda in *The Tempest*:—

> "O wonder!
> How many goodly creatures are there here!
> How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world
> That has such people in't!"

An artistry this for us all to work in; which will surpass assuredly all that brush or pencil can produce!

Have we ever thought of the theology of the laughing face? Man is the animal who laughs. There is no other creature that knows how to do it. When you hear children laugh, still more when you hear a

man laugh, you are listening to the best music the world offers. That we have muscles formed for this, and the soul formed with this in it, what a refutation is it of all the bad theologies; of all the notions of a morose, man-hating destiny! A good, honest laugh blows all that to the winds. The God who made laughter is, be sure, a good and a loving God. Laughter would never have been heard on earth had it not been first heard in heaven. To hear it is to be assured that we are in a good, honest world, a world with a merry heart in it, that means well with us. When I hear a child's laugh, when I look on its joyous countenance I see a revelation of the divine thought about us, of its intentions towards us, which all the gloomy creeds of a dyspeptic theology can never persuade me out of. Who can believe in a cursed, a damned world, while the sound carries this in it? The world's laughter, and what it means, should be among the first articles of our creed.

And have you ever, in your theological quests, studied the face of the dead? Is there not also a revelation there? We have looked upon many—faces of poor, insignificant people, faces of indifferent livers; also upon great faces. And what do we find there? For one thing, the deep religiousness of death. All religion is there; its mystery, its sublimity. No one can pass irreverently into a death-chamber. The face there, in its grand, calm immobility, with everything of littleness wiped out, speaks of the essential greatness of man, of the soul. And is there not here something more? Is there not here nature's seal of uttermost forgiveness, her seal of the goodness, the love that is above

all ? That rugged, worn face, furrowed in life with so many lines of care and struggle—she has wiped out all that as though it were nothing, and brought to it the sweetness, the freshness of a little child. A child we come into this world, with loving faces all around us. And this dead, beautiful face—is it not that also of a child, born into another world, and again with loving faces all around it ?

There are great sights yet in front of us. The world's face is to be made beautiful, more beautiful than it is. And the Spirit of Holiness which has worked through all the ages, and now works, will recreate the human face. It is for us to join in that noble artistry, inspired to our task by that greatest of all words on this theme : " Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." The face of God : we are to see that.

XII

OF DEEP-ROOTED SOULS

In a sense we are all deep-rooted, rooted as deep as the universe itself. We are part of a system of things of which no beginning is discernible, and no end. Our bodies are, in their essence, as old as the seas and the everlasting hills. They draw from them and will go back to them. There never was a time in which they were not; there will be never a time in which they cease to be. Our present sense of weakness, of decay, is only a temporary sense. Our ultimate being is in strength—the strength of eternity. When our bodies die it is for them to begin a new life, under new forms, but always a being, a life. While we tenant them, the process is ever going on. And every moment the universe is passing into them, they into the universe. And mind is as old as matter. There has never been one without the other. There could never have been matter without a mind to know it as matter. Our mind, be sure, has this same quality of everlastingness. In what anterior forms, in what posterior forms, who knows? We remember the curious speculation of Leibnitz that all souls are perfected in a sort of organised body, which at the time of generation has undergone a certain transformation and augmentation. We prefer here what Emerson

has to say : " I cannot tell if the wonderful qualities which house to-day in this mortal frame shall ever reassemble in equal activity in a similar frame, or whether they have had before a natural history. But this one thing I know, that these qualities did not now begin to exist, cannot be sick with my sickness, nor buried in my grave, but that they circulate throughout the universe. Before the world was, they were."

In one form or another we are, then, and shall continue to be, old inhabitants of this universe, rooted, we say, in its everlastingness. But all that is a somewhat far cry. What we want to deal with here is not so much our fortunes in the far past or in the far future, but those of to-day and to-morrow. We are thinking of the sort of souls we are producing, and are likely to produce under the influences of our present civilisation. It is so much a question of the soil they are growing in ; of its depth and richness. Souls are here very much like trees. Like them they depend on two things—their inward nature and their environment. You cannot make a kidney bean into an oak by any manuring process. On the other hand, you cannot grow oaks in Lapland, or in the sand of the Sahara desert. Give your acorn the right soil, a soil with depth in it and richness of quality, and you have promise of your oak, that tree of centuries. And do you notice, given its chance, what a wonderful individuality, one may say, what a force of character, your tree develops ! With an infallible instinct, its roots, searching amid all the varieties the underlying earth contains, accept what is good for it, what feeds its life, and rejects all else. It knows what it wants, and keeps to that ; absorbs

it into its very self. To those other things it presents a relation only of contact and of quiet rejection.

It is here that oakhood offers so potent a lesson to manhood. The deep-rooted oak has so much to say concerning the deep-rooted soul. We are thronged to-day with schemes of education; we are on the quest for the method, the scientific method, of producing the best men and the best women. Everybody sees that it is largely an affair of soil, of the kind of underground earth we are preparing on which the soul-germ shall root itself and find its nourishment. We are all agreed, too, that the soil shall be such as shall feed the right kind of character; shall help the growth of the right affections, of the high and noble ideals. And for this we all say that it must be rooted in truth, the essential truth of life. But what, and where, is that truth; how is it to be found? Here we are at issue. The twentieth century is at a vital point; a point where there is deadly disagreement. How critical the issue is, and how ominous the disagreement, is brought vividly before us in a small work issued by Messrs. Williams & Norgate in their Home University Library, entitled, "A History of Freedom of Thought." The author is Professor J. B. Bury, Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge University. Speaking from that authoritative vantage ground, the Professor offers us what he conceives to be a true history of human progress up to the present day, and an indication of the path it is to pursue in the future. Let us see the kind of soil in which, according to the Professor, the future generations are to grow. The book is, from beginning to end, frankly materialistic. Our first feeling

about it is the oddity of the title. It is called a history of the freedom of thought ; its entire subject is the non-freedom of thought, the complete slavery of the human spirit. We are chained beings in a chained universe, the controlling powers of which are matter and force. The religious view, which offers us a universe beginning with mind and resting on love, with man as an offspring of that mind, endowed with freedom, and responsible for his actions to that mind ; in short, the whole idea of God, freedom and immortality, is dismissed as illusion, with no scientific basis.

There is no such thing as a creative intelligence, a divine purpose in the world. As a specimen of the kind of argument by which this hopeful conclusion is sustained, we may cite the Professor's treatment of the design argument. He thinks it sufficient for the exploding of this argument to point to the imperfections that appear in nature, in structures such as the human body. He quotes Helmholtz as saying of the eye that " if an optician sent it to me as an instrument, I should send it back with reproaches for the carelessness of his work, and demand the return of my money." So we are to believe that because the thing may be bettered, there is no design ! It is curious reasoning. Would any man conclude of a watch, because it was possible to produce a better, that there was no design in it ? Would a Helmholtz hold that because the watch was imperfect, it was the work, not of an optician, but of the mindless operation of a nebulous mist ? If he did say that, would it suggest to us anything beyond the enormous faith of philosophers in search of an atheistic conclusion ? Has it occurred to

these philosophers that in creating an imperfect world, the mind behind it—supposing a mind—may have reasons of its own for a temporary imperfection? That there were reasons for starting us in an imperfect world, as a scene of education for us, as a condition of our own education in working with that mind, as co-operators in improving it, and by that means of improving ourselves? Has it occurred to them that if this mind was one which contemplated as a final end the development of human spirits, in strength and happiness, that the end would be better secured by putting us in a world where there was something for us to do, rather than in one where everything was done, and ourselves placed there, with our hands in our pockets, simply as idle lookers on?

And we say that this is not a true history of freedom of thought, but an entirely partisan and one-sided one. It gives us the supposed triumph of materialism. It leaves out the free thought, the conclusions of equally free and cultivated minds that have arrived at a different conclusion. It attacks Christianity for its supposed opposition to freedom. It leaves out all it has done for the deepening and enriching of the human spirit. It mentions Hegel as an opponent of Christianity. It has nothing to say of the Hegelian Caird of Balliol, of how he shows what a Christian a Hegelian can be. It has no mention of Fichte, or of what he thought of the Christianity of Christ. The history is supposed to be up to date, but we find in it nothing of Martineau, with his magnificent vindication of the spirituality of the cosmos, no word of Dr. Ward's "Realm of Ends," nothing of Romanes, nothing of

Eucken, who is revolutionising German thought; and not a word of Bergson, of the great argument by which he shows how the necessitarians have been all along attacking the problem of free will from the wrong end with a wrong conclusion; nothing of Sir Oliver Lodge, of Sir William Crookes—nothing, in fact, of that whole intellectual process by which minds of the first eminence in science and philosophy have been delivering us from the slough of fatalism, from the nightmare of a chance-begotten world, and giving our poor humanity renewed reasons for hope, for aspirations, for noble living!

A fine soil this, surely, which our professor is preparing for young Cambridge and young England to grow in! What room, what nourishment in it for the spiritual life of man? What room for the soul's highest exercises; for reverence, for love, for purity, for self-sacrifice; what room for all this in a world which has, back of it, no object of reverence, no love, no purity; but only soulless atoms, with chance as their governor; and with nothing in front of it but blank annihilation? What room for courage, except the courage of despair? The "freedom" it offers us is the Horatian freedom, to "pluck the day, for there is no to-morrow"; a freedom to eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. Against reasonings of this kind—very poor reasoning at best—we prefer with Pascal to rely on the heart's reasonings, the soul's deepest instincts. The heart's instinct tells us that our noblest thought, instead of being above the actuality of the universe, is immeasurably below it. And the verdict of the truest feeling is ever a religious verdict. We remember here brave Dr. Johnson's remark on

Hume's nihilism, " All that Hume has advanced had passed through my own mind long before." In spite of Hume the Doctor would trust his heart's verdict. All the great souls have rooted themselves deeper than in matter and force. Our twentieth century will have to find some better soil than this if, in its turn, it is to produce great souls. It has no large harvest of them just now. It is funny to note the condescending air with which our modern chatterers talk of " the Victorian age," as if any of them can compare for a moment with the voices of that age ; with Tennyson and Browning, with Dickens and Thackeray and George Eliot. And all these were deeply religious spirits. In the age of Darwin and evolution, and the most revolutionary discoveries in the realm of matter, they had struck deep into a realm beyond it. We mention George Eliot. She had broken loose from the dogmatic creeds. She had translated Feuerbach and Strauss ; was the companion of Lewes, the intimate of Herbert Spencer, the admirer of Comte. But to the end her heart was in religion. Daily her reading was in the Bible which she loved. She writes to D'Albert : " I have not returned to dogmatic Christianity, to the acceptance of any set of doctrines as a creed ; but I see in it the highest expression of the religious sentiment that has yet found its place in the history of mankind, and I have the profoundest interest in the inward life of sincere Christians in all ages." And where her heart lay—the heart which is man's surest guide—is evident in all her works. In " Adam Bede," the freshest fruit of her genius, the heroine is Dinah Morris, the woman preacher. It is she who exhibits the finest fruits of character, the

highest devotion, the most all-enduring love. It is she to whom all the neighbours go in their hour of need, to whom they turn as the best they know. It is she to whom, alone of all others, poor Hetty Sorrel, in her condemned cell, finally turns for confession, and for the healing of her broken heart. The deepest in George Eliot is there, the deepest expression of that centre of truth, the truth of feeling.

A piece of literature we are much in want of is a natural history of great souls. It should be a scientific history, a world history. Some important chapters in it on the negative side would be the natural history of small ones. We want a clear view of the conditions which make for the two products. We should get a truer view of million-airism, luxury, materialistic pursuits and negative ideas when we learn what they have done towards growing men; and a truer, a more optimistic view of the world's pain and suffering, its toil and difficulty, when we perceive the spiritual product of all that. Assuredly, we shall find one thing, that materialism has never provided a soil deep enough and rich enough for high natures to reach their strength and stature. How luminous is the world history here! Socrates dies for his heresy, his "irreligion." But what is his heresy? Read the "Apology," read the "Phaedo." These souls are all rooted in the spiritual; they have a leaping-off place from the seen to the unseen. Cicero, in his final hour, knowing his fate under the Roman triumvirate, shows us where his roots are. "I do not repent of having lived, because I have lived so as not to have been born in vain; but I go from this life as from an inn and not an abiding place. Nature has given to

man the terrestrial world to stay in it awhile, not to remain there. O great day, which shall liberate me from this sordid scene to rejoin the celestial assembly, the divine congress of souls ! "

These great souls of antiquity struck their roots deep. They sought the best, wherever they could find it. But since then the soil has become incomparably richer. Philosophy had already found that love was the greatest thing in the world. It had said it magnificently in the formula of the Stoic Cleanthes : " Love begins with father and mother. From the family it goes to the district, to the city, to the multitude. It goes on and becomes the holy love of all the world." But with Christianity, with Christ, a new warmth reached the soul. The Divine love, the sense of love, holy, self-sacrificing love, as the centre of things, which the heart of man everywhere yearned for, became realised, actualised; spoke, breathed, lived, in the Man of Nazareth. In seeing, hearing Him, the fainting heart of humanity found what God was, and in that knowledge lived again. The secret of the Church's strength, as Matthew Arnold has it, was in its new, overflowing joy. Here was a new sphere for the soul, a new soil in which to push its roots. Here was the element in which all its faculty of veneration, of affection, of loyalty, of service, could bloom into flower and fruit. As Eucken says : " Christianity meant an immense deepening of the human spirit." Science is apt to reproach the after Christian ages, as a period of arrest in the progress of knowledge. But it was not the arrest of humanity. Do we suppose, we who believe in an ordered evolution, that any one age of that evolution could be a mistake ? There is

no blunder in evolution. There may ha
stay in the development of one side of faculty
it was that another backward side might catch
Admit there was a pause in the matter of world
knowledge. About that we may say with Höffding,
" The pauses in the world course may last very long,
but only he who is able to weave them into their
inner connection with what went before and what
follows after can understand their value, and rest
assured they are something more than mere inter-
ruptions." What Christianity has meant for
character, for the opening out of the finer qualities
of spirit ; what it has meant as a stay in trouble, a
gladness in hardest poverty, a hope in life and death,
only those can understand who have first tried to live
without it, and since have lived with and in it.

To-day we have the richest of all soils for man to
root in. We have all the glorious wealth of the
Christian deposit, and mingled with it all that
knowledge of the universe which modern science has
opened. The two are, in the best minds, working
together to a larger synthesis, to a vaster life. The
thought of to-day is following the path opened by
Schelling, who, in his later period, became mainly
occupied by bringing about the rebirth of religion
through the operation of science in its supremest
form. And science in its supremest form will be
occupied by the mystery of the soul as much as with
the mystery of matter. It will not rest with the
something to know ; it must have also someone to
love. It will have learned that goodness is higher
than knowledge, and that the conditions of human
goodness are given not in revelations of matter, but
in revelations of the spirit.

man the teme is a personal one for us all. To make remain less of life we must get our roots deep into it. me fr are only deep enough rooted we can grow tall ass hout fear. We must have a self developed in us which, like the oak, knows, amid all the elements it meets, what to choose and assimilate, what to reject. With that in us we can move amid all the experiences, all the clash of opposition, knowing what elixirs they contain. Welcome every new experience, the new burden, even the new sorrow. Let them perform their dreadest function ! Is it not to enrich the soil, to drive its roots deeper into the things everlasting ? Blessed difficulties of life, which compel us to find our roots in God !

XIII

RENUNCIATION

Says Goethe, "Renunciation once for all, in view of the eternal." But though Goethe said it, the subject to-day is not popular. Since Goethe we have had Nietzsche, with his doctrine of self-assertion at all costs. Christianity is with him so poor an affair because it makes so much of self-denial, of humility, of giving up; the morality, he affirms, of a subject, defeated race. We are to be all for ourselves, with small regard for the other man. The superman, the man of strength, mighty in will and in faculty, is to rise upon the shoulders of the less inclined. "Be hard" is the watchword. Let the weak find their place—at the bottom. The spoils to the victors, and *væ victis!* The doctrine is popular because it fits in with the modern temper, with its materialism, its lust of pleasure, its scepticism about the spiritual values. Even woman, up to now the refuge of idealism, has caught the infection. Her new *rôle* is to assert herself, to fight for all her rights, a *rôle* she is carrying out with some vigour just now. And so we find ourselves in a scrambling world, where "beggar my neighbour" is the favourite game. Renunciation! 'Tis an ugly word. It smells of the middle ages, of the monk's cell, of a starved life. It is like that other disagreeable word "hell,"

" not to be mentioned to ears polite." Why bring it up to disturb our gaiety, to arouse in us all these morose reflections ?

And yet, somehow, it has got into the language, into all languages, and is likely to remain. It will be hard to dislodge, for it is one of nature's words, a word built out of actual experiences, a word framed in the very structure of the soul. And the thing, whether we like it or not, will be one of the great facts of our life—if we live long enough. Our attitude towards it will make all the difference to us, all the difference between a life-success or a life-failure. And we need not be frightened away from it by any fear of a pessimistic conclusion. For nature, while teaching us to renounce, while compelling us to it, does not teach us to grieve over it—far otherwise, if we will only look deep enough.

For nature, we say, compels us to renounce. She begins the process early, and she carries it on to our last moment. There is a certain humour in her method. She is an inveterate joker, and in all her processes will have her laugh. She dangles her dainties before us, gives us our bite, and in the moment of enjoyment whisks them away. She begins early, we say. Observe her dealing with babyhood. The child comes in, lord of all. The babe, the peasant's babe, is above any emperor. His majesty's majesty does not affect it in the least. It will offer him no homage, but exact it. No cringing, no stooping, no adulation on its side. Unless emperor pays his respects let him look out for snubs ! It is a glorious sovereignty, this of the beginner. But it does not last. A year or so, and our baby is fallen from its throne. It takes its rank, a low one,

to know itself henceforth as a poor struggler in a struggling world. And the king, on his side, is he better off? Kinghood, what a renunciation is there! So much that is a free gift to his fellows is denied to him. Not for him the boons of privacy, the nobody's freedom; not for him the joys of climbing. Think of the monotony of being always at the top! After an hour amid all those biting winds, all that bleakness, we want to get down again to the peace of the lowlands. But he must always stop there.

Do we note how, in nature's scheme for us, every act of ours, every volition is a renunciation? To get something we have always to give up something. If you do this you cannot do that. The man who elects to be a musician, a specialist of any sort, turns his back on a thousand pleasant things. The student who buries himself in his books is losing all the joy of the open air. To be abstemious you forgo the drinker's delight. There must be some fine sensations there, at least for certain throats, or the world's drink bill had been less. We feel the pang which drew from poor Lamb the cry: "Must I then leave you, gin, rum, brandy, aqua vitæ, pleasant, jolly fellows!" All the nations have been topers. Over a tavern in old Athens there was this Greek inscription: "He who drinks well sleeps well; he who sleeps well has a pure conscience; he who has a pure conscience is dear to the gods; therefore, he who drinks well is dear to the gods." Assuredly, if the stories of them be true, the gods had a fellow feeling here. And if the logic was bad, doubtless the jovial Athenians found the liquor good, which was the main thing.

This law of giving up one thing to get another is, we say, written all over life. We empty the soul to find room for something else. The man of industry forswears idleness. Industrialism, as we have it to-day—there is a renunciation if you like! Nothing seems to have been dearer to primitive man than his laziness. And it survives still with a monstrous tenacity. Fichte has an anecdote of a sailor who preferred to take the risks of hell to exerting himself to self-improvement in this life. "There he would only have to suffer, whereas the other line of things would compel him to do something!" Quite numberless are the ways in which nature pursues us with her forced renunciations. A man marries, and gives up the freedom of his bachelorhood. What the woman gives up—she herself best knows. In our very pleasure-seeking we are compelled to renounce. Nature follows here what the economists call "the law of diminishing returns." The first sip is always the best. As we drink the quality of the liquor deteriorates. When a man comes into a fortune his first sensation is ecstatic. It does not taste so well in a year, and the time comes when the experience has quite ceased to be a joy-bringer. The holiday is glorious at the beginning. It will be odd if the man is not bored before it is over. And then, as life advances, there comes a great stripping process. "Old age," said Bishop Warburton, "is a losing game"—a truer thing than the majority of that bishop's *dicta*. In this period a multitude of the old delights lose their zest. The senses become less keen, labour becomes more difficult. One retires from the old employments, the old glories. The leaves fall in

showers from the tree. And the last moment is a final giving up. The world he has loved, and in which he has lived, finally closes its door on him. *Vixit.*

This seems a mournful recital. And it would be if all were here said. But it is only half, and the least significant half. For now let us observe nature's way of renunciation, with what glimpses it affords of her meaning in it. Do you note, to begin with, how gently she does this work, and what healing balm she applies to the wounds she makes? She takes away from our life, but always so as to leave us reconciled with life. And what she takes away is generally replaced with something better. We find, somehow, a home in our lot, spite of its negations. The proof of that is in the vast disinclination we find to the idea of changing it for that of another. Even kings find their uneasy summit tolerable, and, as a rule, abdicate only on compulsion. Temperance knows nothing of the elect moments of debauch; but it would be sorry to go back to them. Its renunciation has come so heavily weighted with gifts, that it blesses the day of it. Having been drummed out of our idleness into industry, we find its forbidding frontier the opening to a land of delights. If we have lived long enough we shall have reached Voltaire's view: "The further I advance in life's career the more I find work to be a necessity. It becomes finally the greatest of pleasures, and takes the place of all the illusions one has lost." We renounce when, at the beginning, we take to life; we renounce when, in old age, we give up so much of it. But old age, with well-nourished souls, is no unhappiness. Channing found it in his most blessed period; and

we remember that fine saying of Seneca, writing to his young friend Lucilius: "My soul is full of vigour, and rejoices in no longer having so much to do with the body. It leaps with joy and holds with me all sorts of discourses on old age; it says that it is its flower." As to the final renunciation which death brings, nature makes it for us a very easy affair; so easy that the stupidest of us, as well as the wisest, bring it off with perfect success. She takes the whole business of it on her own hands. It is a falling asleep, one of the pleasantest of processes. Sir James Paget, the eminent surgeon, held that there was a certain physical enjoyment in dying.

But all this, real and vital though it be, is on the surface. We see that nature compels us to renounce. We have yet to ask, why that stern compulsion? We have a right to ask that, for nature seems full of purpose. She does nothing indifferently. All her vast processes, so far as we can discern them, are means to ends. From the spiral wheel of a nebula to the civilisation of the twentieth century she has been working towards life; towards more life and fuller. From the inorganic to the organic; from vegetable to animal; from animal to man; the movement is upwards. And in man the movement is still upwards; it is from the animal to the spiritual. Man, in this world, is the one organ of that, and the organ which she is now incessantly engaged upon, with the design of developing and perfecting it. Her problem is, in a world of matter, to create a world of spirit. And man, compounded of the two, with a body which relates him to the one, and a soul that relates him to the other, is her instrument for solving it. And here comes in Goethe's mighty word,

" Renunciation, once for all, in view of the eternal." Yes, it is renunciation that becomes now nature's working tool. It is for this that she compels us upon her discipline; for this it is that she has stamped upon every earthly sensation, every pleasure, every experience, the mark of the transitory. By her relentless time movement she teaches us eternity. What a mark she has put on all fleshly delights! It is the mark of disesteem. How true here is that saying of Fichte: " We may love, seek, and desire the pleasures of sensuality, and may feel delight in experiencing them, but we can never hold them in esteem; esteem does not apply to them at all." And as her kingdom of the spirit grows—and it does grow—the soul becomes ever stronger and clearer in its renunciations. We now cease to grumble at nature's discipline. We take sides with her, discerning her high purpose. We make war upon the flesh. We clear out, one after another, the clogging, inferior elements to make room in us for higher things. This movement, mark you, is not merely an individual one, though it begins there. It is a human, a universal one. Our modern materialism is only a transitory thing. The whole world is upon this path of renouncement. It is steadily giving up the lower animal moods.

Observe, for instance, the modern movement against war. In the war spirit all the animalisms are concentrated. The old bloodthirstiness, the old lust of killing, the lust of power, of dominating your neighbour, the lust of possession, the getting things at all costs, the lust of pride and vainglory, the lust of rape, violation and lubricity—they are all here, blood relations, the compact organisms of the brute

in us. Good men have seen this in every age. Says Erasmus: "I often wonder that human beings, especially Christian human beings, can be so mad as to go fighting one another." Horace Walpole, writing of the wonderful year, 1759, when England was conquering in East and West, says: "Our bells are worn threadbare with ringing of victories." He quotes Voltaire's "Universal History," in which is a chapter with the title "The English Victorious in the Four Quarters of the World," and says: "Yet, tasting its honours and elated with them, I heartily, seriously wish they had their quietus. What is the fame of men compared with their happiness? Who gives a nation peace gives tranquillity to all. How many must be wretched before one can be renowned?" Well, we have reached a point where this view is no longer the property of a few illuminated minds, but where it has entered as a new development of the universal soul. Humanity is getting ready to turn out of itself, as something inferior, the desire for domination; it is beginning to see the absurdity of hate and the common-sense of love; it is longing to cut its connection with violence and thievery as, from beginning to end, a bad, unprofitable business. What is coming is a human renunciation, the finest, the most portentous, the world has yet seen.

So moves in our midst the kingdom of the spirit. Christianity is proving itself mightier than Nietzsche. Even its seeming defeats are victories. The German Socialists repudiate the Christian faith, and are at the same time exhibiting its fruits. Their proclamation of universal brotherhood and of the abolition of war has more Christianity in it than all the orthodoxies.

Christ would smile at these deniers, Christ, who believed in hearts and acts so much more than in dogmas. It is from Him we have learned the meaning of nature's law. He is mighty because He is finally her chief exponent. He taught renunciation, taught by practising it. He taught how to win the world by losing it; how to achieve the vaster life by clearing out of the soul the rubbish that choked. At every point His way demonstrates itself as the only way. As we follow it we are astonished at our stupidity in not seeing all this before. His renunciation, as we practise it, shows as a perpetual deliverance. When we have renounced hatred, jealousy, pride, envy, vicious pleasures, we find we are ridding ourselves of diseases, and entering on the true health. We give up, and give up, but the soul has no vacant places. The disorderly crew that has gone is replaced by "shining ones." We discard the transitory for the permanent. We find with Boehme that "he for whom time is as eternity and eternity as time is freed from all struggle." We see, with Caird, that "the Christian, in giving away everything which he has for himself as against another, in surrendering every exclusive good, is widening, not narrowing his life. In ceasing to contend for his rights against others he has made all their rights his own." We see that life's finest investment, the most profitable investment of our wealth, our time, our powers, is the investing of them in the good, the happiness of others. Here are dividends whose value alone the soul can estimate.

Wonderful is the calm, the interior peace, that comes to the man who has learned how to renounce. It is this alone which can reconcile us to life, which

enables us even to understand it. It is peace, whatever happens. When one desirable thing after another is taken away, the instructed soul falls back upon its infinite reserve in God. He is in the business, knows it all, and that is enough. The sense of this is the treasure of humble souls. George Eliot voices the faith of millions of them—a faith which contains the wisdom of all the ages—when she makes Dolly Winthrop, the blacksmith's wife, say to Silas Marner, when he lost his little fortune, "Eh, there's trouble i' this world, and there's things as we can never make out the rights on. And all as we've got to do is to trusten, Mr. Marner—to do the right thing as far as we know, and to trusten. For if us, as knows so little, can see a bit o' good and rights, we may be sure there's a good and a rights bigger nor what we can know. I feel it i' my own inside as it must be so."

Renunciation, once for all, in view of the eternal. It seems a good doctrine after all. Only let us not misunderstand it. It offers no commission to idleness, to apathy, to indifference. It means anything but an empty world, or an empty soul. On the contrary, it gives us a full-blooded vigour because it gives us a full-blooded hope. It is a doctrine of values, of what are the higher and what the lower. The man who embraces it must beware of one thing. He must not seek to impose his renunciation upon other people. The beauty of it is that it is each man's own secret. You cannot make your growth that of your neighbour. You cannot impose it on your neighbour. Try it, and you will assuredly fail. Your only success will be in becoming a nuisance. It is, we say, each man's own secret,

the secret won out of his experience, his traffic with life, with time, with eternity. But oh ! it is a great secret. It is the secret of accepting the universe, with all its infinity, its depth of meaning ; of the universe with its apparatus of sense in front, and with its spiritual behind ; with its fleeting moment and its timeless underneath ; the secret which, when the world seems most vacant, makes it for us most filled with God ; which opens to us the meaning of the apostolic word of " having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

XIV

THE CONVERSION OF POWER

THE conversion of power, the changing of it, that is, from one form into another, has been going on from the beginning of the world. It is only of late, however, that we have begun to understand it and to see its possibilities. Science is full of it, and thrusts the thing upon us at every turn. You go into an electrical power-house, and listen to the hum of those mighty revolving cylinders. What are they doing? They are turning motion, friction, into electricity. But what is turning them? You visit the engine-room, the boilers, the furnaces. There you find coal passing into heat, which, in its turn, is converting water into steam, whose pressure, cunningly applied, makes the cylinders move. And when you ask where the coal obtained its reserves of heat, you go back across ages, across millions of miles of space to where the sun, æons ago, pouring its energy upon the earth, created on its surface a vegetable life, that died, was buried, crushed under succeeding rock formations, holding in the compressed coal-form all this sun heat, to be dug out finally and to yield its hoarded energy under our steam boiler. And at the other end you find the electricity, thus created, resolving itself once again into motion, urging railway trains, turning the wheels of factories, or passing into light and illuminating a myriad homes.

Conversion of Power

The transmutation of energy! It is a new book of revelation here opened to us, and no one can say what treasures are yet to be drawn from it. Up to now science has been its most enthusiastic and most proficient pupil. Every day it offers us a new chapter of discovery. Out of pitchblende it has produced radium and thorium, the wonder-workers. It shows us the world as just a storehouse of power, of power immense, inexhaustible; powers stored in vegetation, in stones, in metals; powers so tremendous that to liberate them is to endow us with a thousandfold potency. It has been said that the atomic force contained in a centime piece, if liberated, would drive a railway train twice round the circumference of the earth. We can scarcely imagine what man will be when he has mastered more of these secrets, clothed himself with all these potencies. But the scope of science is within material things, and these, after all, are the smallest part of the life of man. There is a spiritual side of this conversion of power, which as yet we have only begun to consider, but which is going to be indeed a new revelation, full of momentous results. It is on what we have to learn on this aspect of the new knowledge that we want here principally to concentrate attention.

It is worth noting, in the first place, that in her conversion of power, nature's movement is a consistently upward one. Our planet's history begins with a chaos of lifeless matter, in a state of prodigious confusion. For countless ages, as the flaming mass cools and hardens, there is nothing but what, to us, would be a reign of horror. Gaseous explosions which hurl their fiery tongues far into space; volcanic upheavals which rend and twist the earth crust into

weirdest shapes; incessant roar and crash as the contending forces hurl themselves upon each other. But the long war comes to an end. A solid surface appears, edged everywhere by encircling, carefully-balanced seas. Out of confusion, order; out of ghastly ugliness, the beginnings of beauty. Then the miracle of organic life. The plains are covered with vegetation. Immense growths cover the steaming earth, growths which are to fill the world's store-houses with fuel. From vegetable the lift is to animal, and from animal finally to man. Man begins as animal, to go on to the reasonable, and finally to the spiritual. If, with our present intelligence, we could have watched those first processes, so seemingly interminable in their endurance, we should have been filled with dread and despair. It would have seemed to us only an eternal war of malignant powers. But we should have been wrong. The worst enemy to our faith then, as it is now, would have been our impatience, our shortsightedness. Could we have had a vision of the future, could we have seen even what we have before us to-day, the order that has been reached, the beauty revealed, how different our conclusion!

We know the other side of this argument. We are told that the upward movement of our planet is to be succeeded by a downward one; that our whole solar system may be annihilated by the clash of some opposing sun; or, failing that, that the sun's heat will exhaust itself, and that then our earth, from the ever increasing cold, will cease to be habitable and become as lifeless as the moon. Everything that grows decays and dies; and that is as true of the world as of every blade of grass that grows upon it.

To all of which there is an easy answer. Supposing the outward facts to be as here stated, is there any reason in them for the conclusion? True, the world's previous history has been one of decays. Each generation of vegetable and animal life has decayed. Many of the old vegetable types, many of the old animal types, have disappeared. But those very decays have ever been part of a progress, a progress towards a larger, fuller life. There has been a steady conversion of power here, the advance of which has ever been towards the development of the spiritual. Man is the supreme organ of that. And the spiritual in him is curiously above and defiant of the material. The spiritual is in the material, but not of it, using it as an instrument, but always with its own development, acquainted with other forces, following other laws. And who shall say that any crash or crumbling of the material will be to that spiritual aught else but a new conversion of its power, the union of itself with a higher spiritual that is in the universe? That we have been going upward, and have been for ages, is an argument—the force of which nothing that has yet appeared is able to destroy—that the movement is to continue, and in the same direction.

This law of the conversion of power is an entirely hopeful one, and nowhere more so than in its refutation of the materialist and pessimistic theories which rule so much of the thinking of to-day. M. Gustave le Bon, in his "Psychologie du Socialisme"—one of the most depressing books we have read for many a day—gives us his view of the modern reign of force. We notice it here, not merely for the scientific eminence of the author

and the power and eloquence with which he presents his view, but because he stands as the representative of so widespread and influential a school of Continental thought. He urges that in the modern, as in the ancient, world material and intellectual force are the only things that count. It has been so from the beginning, and will be so to the end. Altruism, the moral sense, religion, are only dreams; phrases with which men deceive themselves. They are not in nature. Nature has no moral sense, no altruism, no distinction of good and bad. Her law is the law of the strongest, of their survival, and the subjection or destruction of the weak. That is how evolution works. That is how nations and individuals always act, and always will act. As confirmation he points to the modern world, and to recent history. No one has followed this law more ruthlessly than the so-called Christian nations. The strong States beat down the weaker. The Anglo-Saxon in America has exterminated the Indian. The European is pursuing to-day the same *rôle* in Africa. In Europe Germany has swallowed Schleswig-Holstein, has beaten Austria, has defeated France, and is preparing further conquests. The United States has driven Spain from Cuba, from the Philippines, and is waiting to absorb South America. England, which won India by blood and fire, has since crushed the Boers in South Africa, and has seized Egypt. All the great nations are armed to the teeth and wait for their rivals' weak moment to attack and destroy. The only law is strength, and woe to the weak!

The historical facts here are very much as he states, and they make sombre reading. But has he

drawn from them the right conclusion? We know the deceptiveness of the half-truth, and M. le Bon has kept out here the biggest half. Indeed, his initial statement about nature is completely and entirely wrong. When he speaks of nature as ruthless, without conscience, without care for justice and right, he is forgetting that man, according to his own showing, is a product of nature, her highest on this earth. It is through him she is striving to express herself. He is the chosen interpreter of her whole meaning. And this product of hers is becoming ever fuller and fuller of that moral and spiritual sense which he denies to her. If nature is without conscience, how came conscience into being? If it is not in her scheme, how comes it there? With this in mind we can go a step further. Let us admit the predominance of force; admit that the stronger everywhere wins. Let us admit that, so far, force has too often been used ruthlessly, and without mercy. But what our author has completely forgotten is the fact that force, in nations and individuals, is itself becoming converted, raised from a lower to a higher form. Appearing in man, first as physical, then as mental, and selfishly mental, it is visibly on our earth becoming transmuted into another form, a form in which love and service and sacrifice become increasingly predominant. If history shows anything it shows that. Where are now the ancient barbarisms, the atrocities of Attila, of Timour, of Genghis Khan? What general would now act as Titus did at the conquest of Jerusalem? Where is the old slavery, the old serfdom? Where the old criminal codes with their tortures and wholesale executions? Conquests are

no longer what they were. England won against the Boers and granted them a free constitution. A new conscience has arisen as to the treatment of the weaker races. We have already got so far, and the movement is all in one direction. Force is becoming spiritual, and nothing can resist the onward march. And it is nature which is doing that; only a higher nature than M. le Bon wots of. It is a nature which includes love and righteousness and God.

But this doctrine is not meant merely for the historian; it is not meant to leave us as spectators of what has been going on. It is a doctrine for action, for our action. The business of the Church to-day, of all believing men, is that of the conversion of power. And observe here, that just as in the natural, so in the spiritual world, the ultimate source of the power is beyond and above ourselves. In the physical system we owe everything to the sun. The earth is just a receiver of its light and heat, and by receiving and transmuting it has become what it is. All its power comes from above. And we expect to get more and more out of the sun by better uses of it. We hear of receivers in tropical countries which by collecting and concentrating its rays, are being used as creators of mechanical energy. All the forces indeed that are stored in the earth are sun forces; and we have only begun to tap them as yet. We are clear about this in the physical realm. We are dubious about it in that other, and yet there is nothing more sure. Man has no more made himself spiritually than he has made himself bodily. His soul owes itself ultimately to the flowing in upon him of ethereal powers from beyond, and the growth in him of a capacity to receive and assimilate them.

And the problem of religion, of the Church to-day, is the problem of a larger receptive area, of a better use of what it gathers there. The New Testament is here in a strict line with science. "But ye shall receive power." In the far future we may anticipate that man will have so grown on this side that he will move mountains where we cannot shift molehills. But even now we could receive so much more than we have. To get these sun forces we must put ourselves in the way of them, and open wide the windows to let them in. If we follow the right way, they are as certain to come to us as electricity comes when you have the right apparatus and the right connection. Those old ways of obedience, of pureness, of spiritual desire, of the daily, hourly uplift of the soul to God; here always the sunbeams strike; here their heat may be felt. Receiving them we give over doubting; we begin working, and soon we begin reaping.

One of the results here is the steady conversion of the lower powers in us into something of a higher grade. An immense mistake, fallen into by religious people of all ages, has been to suppose that emotion, carried to a sufficient height, was the real spirituality, and rendered all other gifts unnecessary. We find it in the Montanism of the second century; in the Gospellers of Germany in Luther's time; it has been a familiar feature in the English and American revivals. To be filled with the Spirit—which with these people meant a certain emotional exaltation—was everything and a substitute for everything. In comparison with it, the fruits of study, of learning, of all intellectual achievement, were matters of no account: to be avoided, indeed, as temptations of

the evil one. If these people had had a little more learning, they would have despised it less. It would have shown them that the great religious leaders, the Wesleys, the Luthers, the Calvins, the Augustines, the great Greek Fathers, were always men of brains—of brains well packed and hard worked. In order to convert your powers you must have some powers to convert! The rule we are under puts no premium on idleness, and is perfectly aware of the difference between stupidity and strength. But the point is here, that to become a spiritual force, all our inheritance of faculty needs to be converted. It requires a transmutation as real and actual as that of vegetable into animal, as that of coal into electricity. Of itself it is just a force, which may be, and often is, the most ruthless in the world. There wait upon it, eager for alliance, all the devil's legionaries—pride, selfishness, ambition, the lust of applause, the lust of conquest; and the Church's hope—and let us say the world's hope—lies in the conversion of this power, the lifting of it into a realm where it will work free from those lower influences, the transmuting of it all into the life of love, into the sacrifice of God as seen in the light of the Cross.

The light of the Cross. That is the sun-ray which is to do for the soul what the solar heat has done for the earth. And it is not only heat, but light. In its beam we see the solution of the world's enigma, above all of its enigma of suffering. All the pessimisms that have been bred of pain disappear when we see in the Cross what suffering really means. If it were there as an end, as a thing to be endured, with nothing to follow, a huge mass of distressfulness into which a waste world has blundered, we might well

be pessimists. But in the Cross we see it as never an end, but always a means. In all its forms, the lowest, the most appalling, it is a means, a force which turns itself, and other things, into a final good. We see it in ourselves, turning itself into courage, into hardihood, into pity, into sympathy, into invention, into remedies. And in the Cross we see how God takes suffering, how He willingly enters into its worst forms; and shows us, not only in the hours on Calvary, but in all the world history since, what triumphs lie hidden there. There have we in its highest exercise the will to suffer for others, and by it to bring them redemption. For as St. Bernard has it, "*Non mors sed voluntas placuit sponte morientis*" (Not the death but the will of Him who willingly died is its essence of satisfaction). And the sufferer conquers by enduring. As Augustine has it, "*Victor quia victima*" (He is the conqueror by being the victim). And as we ourselves enter into that death, feel in ourselves the prick of the thorny crown, and the piercing of the spear, we, too, find ourselves conquerors. Our powers, too, have become converted. We know ourselves as among the spiritual forces of the world.

In this new life we realise how nature herself is holy; how her laws have the Cross for their centre. When we have reached this stage we see how all her universe is for that life and ministers to it. Her native healings are spiritual healings. In times of exhaustion, when overworn by our task, overworn till we feel incapable of a noble thought or a loving deed, how often have we, in such an hour, yielded ourselves joyfully to her loving ministrations! We have gone out to breathe her air, to inhale her quiet, her

sunshine, to find by and by how these voiceless powers, stealing into the body and into the mind, there become transformed into peace and love and the eagerness for service! The divine without us has become the divine within us. The God in the breeze was the God in the thought. And if God be for us, with us, who shall be against us?

XV

THE EVANGELICAL ROOT

PROTESTANTISM, looking at it on the world scale, seems just now in a somewhat bad way. On the Continent it is at the lowest ebb. In France, where it was once a power, St. Bartholomew dealt it a blow from which it never recovered, and the revocation of the Edict of Nantes was a stroke hardly less crushing. It drained the country's veins of some of its most precious life-blood. The work of the Encyclopædists of the eighteenth century, and the Revolution which followed, completed the business. Amongst masses of the French people the very instinct of religion seems to have been extinguished. Says M. Fouillée: "The religion of the French peasant is a disguised paganism, or religious indifference." In Germany, the land of Luther, Lutheranism is a confessed failure. It offers the spectacle of empty churches, of an ever decreasing supply of candidates for the ministry, of an appalling growth of materialism and sensuality. People are tumbling over each other in their eagerness to cut every visible connection with the Church. Those who remain as its professed adherents treat its ceremonies and obligations with contemptuous indifference. Everywhere on the Continent, one may say, the movement is backward rather than forward. In England, as compared with these other lands, we

note one enormous difference. In the eighteenth century, so disastrous spiritually to the Continent, we had the vast movement of the Evangelical Revival. What that meant in its saving power—saving, not only in the religious sense, but socially and politically, to the whole English-speaking race—no statistics can compute, no, and no imagination can well exaggerate. One wonders what had been the difference to Europe if France and Germany had seen their Wesley and their Whitefield; had seen their masses stirred as ours were, by that mighty Gospel? But in England we have to ask, Where does the movement stand to-day? Here, too, are signs of decadence. Here, too, we have the spectacle of emptying churches, of growing indifference, of disheartened workers. The great missionary effort, full of fight at the front, finds weakness at its base; a lack of enthusiasm, a lack of supplies. It is time for us all to take stock of this position, to note what is lacking.

What we want, above all things, to get at now is the secret of that old Evangelic movement—what gave it its conquering power. About it, as an historical fact, there is, of course, one thing to be recognised. There are things in it that are no longer alive, and that can by no process be resuscitated. History does not repeat itself. When a thing is dead, it is dead, and there is no raising it from the grave. But there is this to be remembered here. We may put it in Carlyle's words: "The old never dies till this happens, till all the soul of good that was in it gets itself transformed into the practical new." The old Evangelism has, we say, some things in it that are dead; but its soul, what and where is that? Can we catch that, and transform it into the effectively

new? We have to recognise that its views of creation, of human origin, of inspiration and revelation, of the universe as a whole, were pre-scientific, and will never again recover their hold. What we have learned there is not to be unlearned. We cannot go back upon ascertained truth. What the men of the past proclaimed on these points they proclaimed with perfect honesty. They had received these views and had no evidence to the contrary. We have received that contrary evidence, and the mind, by its very constitution, cannot go against evidence. Moreover, the larger realm of knowledge into which we have entered has radically changed the form of some of the great Evangelic doctrines. We now see creation, revelation, atonement and salvation as processes rather than as separate facts, though there are great outstanding facts as parts of the process, as distinct registers of a given advance. But what most of us need now to see is that none of these changes touches the essence, the soul, the root of the Evangelic Gospel. The things, the powers, by which our fathers won back England to religion, are there, intact, and need only to be used to win a new victory. Let us try and find out what these things, these forces, were.

The first thing we find there is an overwhelming sense of the reality, the nearness, the supreme importance of the spiritual world. Is it not a noteworthy thing that in Germany to-day, where Protestantism is retreating all along the line, the one religious system that is holding its own, and gaining ground, is the Roman Church? Surely it is not difficult to guess the reason! Romanism, with all its monstrous assumptions, has nevertheless some-

thing solid to offer. It has body and blood in it. In place of negatives, which never yet fed a starving man, it offers affirmatives. It tells a man he has a soul which needs saving, and that it can save him. It makes the spiritual world real to him, as real as his hat or his hand; and tells him it is the biggest thing in life. And the poor fellow, feeling he has a soul, which he would fain keep warmed and fed, faced with the deathly cold of the State Church, faced with the brutal denials of Social Democracy, turns shivering to the only warm hearth that is in sight, to the cupboard which offers something to eat.

The actively spiritual which Rome offers Germany to-day was in essence what Wesley and his coadjutors offered the English proletariat in the eighteenth century. They did not begin, let it be observed, with social reform, though there was more desperate need of it then than there is now. They did not discuss political questions, though if ever there were big political questions it was surely then. Think of what was happening in that century! England had lost the United States. In return she had wrested Canada from the French, and had conquered India. Then had come the French Revolution, which shook every throne in Europe. For its tremendous reaction on England you need to read the debates, the newspapers, the memoirs of the time. Yet, as you study the inner life of the great revival, the astonishing thing is that you find so little reference there to all this hurly-burly outside. Read the journals of Wesley, the lives of the Methodist preachers, the letters and memoirs of Berridge, of Fletcher of Madeley, of Grimshaw

and others of the Evangelical clergy. These people are all full of something else; they make their people full of it. It was not outside things but inside things they were busy about. They were sure that was the proper order. They had caught the meaning of that traditional saying of Jesus which Origen reports: "Pray for the great things, and the small shall be added unto you; pray for the heavenly, and the earthly shall be added unto you." To get a man's soul right with God; to get society's soul right with God, that was the way of getting everything else right in this world. It looks sensible; it was sensible. Have we in our day found any better order of procedure? Is our present method of busying ourselves about everything else than the centre doing as well, from the Christian point of view, and from the material point of view, as did theirs? When we, as they did, put first things first; when we put the spiritual world at the top of life; when we believe, as they did, in the spiritual values as the supreme values, we shall get other people to believe in them—not till then.

There is another thing to be noted in that early movement. To-day philosophy, with science following it, is occupied supremely with the question of personality. We find personality to be the final, ultimate thing in the universe. It is to its completer expression that nature incessantly works. It is back of her as the explanation of her movement; it is front of her as her constant goal. It is the key of history; all its great eras hinge on personalities; begin with them, end with them. The early Evangelicals had no particular philosophy

on this subject. They were not great in philosophy. But their instinct, and still more their experience, had struck on the truth, and they used it with glorious results. They found their religion in personality; in a supreme Person. In an age which had dissipated doctrine into a vague and far off Deism, a God remote from the world, they electrified the masses with the preaching of Jesus Christ. They preached Him as making God near, actual, almost visible. They saw in Him all that God means; and all that man means. It was just what the weary world had so long been searching after. What a yearning of the old world is expressed in that word of Seneca: "We ought to choose some good man, and always have him before our eyes, that we may live as if he watched us, and do everything as if he saw." The Evangelical strength was that it had re-found Christ; it had re-found that rapture of the early Christians in the discovery of a Life divine, brought in visible form to their own lives, a Life divine which was also human, in whose unsearchable riches, accordingly, all humanity could share. Here we say the Evangelic fathers had struck the true philosophy and the true religion. The world to-day has nothing to compare with it. These men did good business, for they brought to the market what they knew to be the pearl of price.

They drew men's attention to the highest point which had been reached in human life, and bid them attach themselves on to that, realise its uplifting, saving power. They could not lift themselves without a help from what was beyond themselves. No man can lift himself by tugging at his own braces.

So they showed the way up by pointing to One who could lift them, because His own hold was in God. In Him they were in contact with "the holiest among the mighty; the mightiest among the holy." They put into practical operation the truth which Goethe preaches in "Wilhelm Meister," where, speaking of a broken crucifix, he says: "I cannot help recognising in this crucifix the fortunes of the Christian religion, which, often enough dismembered and scattered abroad, will ever in the end gather itself together at the foot of the Cross."

Another thing which distinguished this movement, and made for its success, was its note of urgency. A man's own salvation was for him the chief thing; to be settled here and now. In this matter they did not hesitate to bring in the motive of fear. Have we not been, in our day, a little too squeamish, more squeamish than the facts of life warrant? These men had a doctrine of hell which was crude enough. William Law, the High Church saint who was John Wesley's first inspirer, found it too crude to his later reflection, and came to Boehme's view, who regarded heaven and hell as states actually deciding all our thoughts and actions, not a mere future palace and prison. However they phrased it, what they meant by hell, by "the wrath of God," was the plain, incontestable fact that the universe turns a very ugly face towards sin, towards wrong being and wrong doing. The state of things brought always the worst consequences, now and always. To get a man out of that was worth some strong language. When a man is in a wrong and dangerous position a thorough shaking up, even

by wholesome terror, may be the best thing for him. He will do things then that surprise himself. Tell a man who says he cannot move a step farther that within six yards of him lies a mine of dynamite that will explode in five minutes and he will run like a deer. Well that he can! There is a moral condition, that of millions to-day, where nothing but a good fright will rouse. And if you put "hell and damnation" for all that system of things which punishes guilt and the abandonment of the good, are the words too strong? It *is* hell and damnation, and those early Evangelicals knew it and said it. And the medicine griped and worked.

But the main point of this urgency was in the business of saving; the damning was part of the saving. These men believed the worst about sin. They believed the best about sinners. They were glorious optimists. They told the roughs they preached to that heaven was close at hand and they could enter it there and then. God, so far from having a grudge against them, was ready not only to forgive them but to treat them to His best. And numbers took them at their word and found it all true. These Evangelicals were evolutionists without knowing it. They believed in the next step. They believed in variation, and that its finest possibilities were in the human family. They believed in a divine root in man, which, given its chance, would show itself and change and glorify its whole nature. And as soon as the people got hold of that they began to sing. The Methodist hymns were the outburst of a new joy that had come to English hearts. They sang in their meeting-houses, in their workshops, in their homes.

And when people are singing over their work you may leave off pitying them.

And we say that this movement, purely religious, purely spiritual, was, within the range of its influence, the best solution of the social question that has yet been offered. The little communities that were formed under this influence offer us the secret of the true social life. Here was the ideal community, a band of men and women united by a spiritual tie, by a common interest of faith, hope, and love—of the deepest things of the heart. If there is any other way of creating a true social life we should be glad to hear of it. It has not appeared so far. The social reformer, who proposes to put everything right by a redistribution of property, must be a very naïve sort of person. So is the educationist, who thinks that the social problem, the art of living together, will be solved by a better brain-drill. When you have got everybody well housed, well clothed, well fed, and well equipped mentally, what have you done? The biggest scoundrels abroad to-day are people who have got all this. You may endow a man with all the powers that modern civilisation, its wealth, its culture, can offer, and you have absolutely no guarantee that he will not use them as weapons with which to arm his wickedness. Social reform of this sort is beginning from the wrong end. It is to build without having prepared your materials. It is as if you should use clay before making it into bricks; timber that has never been seasoned. That is why all the Socialisms of yesterday and to-day have failed and will fail. Nothing can be done with men communally until they have been effectively dealt with individually.

It is when men's hearts have been set to the right tune; when they have been brought into a right relation with life's highest and holiest, and sworn allegiance to that; when they have learned religion's secret of faith and love—it is only out of such materials that you can build an enduring, a happy world. Napoleon even, when he came to rule France, had found that out. Said he to Roederer: "How shall we get morality? There is only one way—it is to re-establish religion."

If the Church is to flourish, and if the nation is to flourish—in the best sense—we shall have to get back to the old Evangelical root. We shall have to get back its conquering faith in God, its conquering faith in men; get back its hardihood, its simplicity, its sense of urgency in dealing with souls, its belief that men, properly met with the spiritual claim, will yield to it and start on the way upward. What is the use of sermons that mean nothing, and that do nothing? When we think of some of them we call to mind the words Victor Hugo puts into the mouth of Satan:

> Quand plus tard, dans l'enfer vengeur, nous assommons
> Tous ces lourds sermonneurs, c'est avec leurs sermons.

It will not be as bad as that, we hope, but some of them need to wake up. Surely, by this time we have learned what the work of the Church really is? Its social work is spiritual work. Its duty in the social fabric is, above and beyond all else, to prepare the material to be built into it. Not by pottering at this or that architectural idea; not by fancy essays at social town planning, but by turning the clay into bricks. It is only when you have got souls into shape that you can build them into the City of God.

XVI

THE UNREACHED PARADISE

The story of Moses dying in view of Canaan without entering on it, is not just a piece of individual biography. It is our story, the story of the human heart. We are all of us marching forward towards a paradise more or less in view, a paradise we do not enter. What we look for we do not get. We attain the object of our desires to find it is not what we desired. Our moment of possession—if we do possess—is the moment of our disillusion. A strange world, we say, which offers us this for its result! It seems an indictment of life altogether. Schopenhauer and others have built on it an elaborate dogma of pessimism. We may look into this later on, and offer some reasons for a different conclusion. But let us look first at the facts themselves, the strange, the singular facts of the situation. It is told how in the eleventh century, when the fervent hosts of the Crusaders tramped across Europe, the wearied children, as they espied each new town, cried out with joyful expectancy, "Is not this, then, Jerusalem?" Alas! Jerusalem was still a long way off. Man has always been uttering that cry and always his Jerusalem lies further on. Man is the eternal seeker; what he finds, instead of satisfying, makes him ever more eager in his quest. His *terminus ad quem*, as soon as reached, becomes a

terminus a quo. Whether in his business or his pleasure, the process is always the same. Notice your holiday excursionist as he arrives at his seaside watering place. Will he stay there when he has reached it? The next morning he is scanning the list of trips that will take him away from it. For years your homebound Englishman has treasured in his heart the thought of Grindelwald or Chamonix as places to see before he dies. He gets there—and then? Compel him to sit there for a single day in front of his hotel! Impossible. His end has become a starting point. Ever for the new, the fresh sensation; the goal is nothing, the march is all.

And this, which happened to you yesterday, has been the story of humanity in all the conditions, in all the ages. The ancients had a jest about Thales, who fell into a well while looking up at the stars. Man has been habitually falling into wells while looking up at the stars. He is so incorrigible a dreamer. His eyesight carries so much further than his feet. The stars are there, sure enough, but they are far off. The well is close by, and so often he fails to see the two together. Nothing, so far, has been more pitiful than the magnificence of man's vision and the poverty of its outcome. Think of the Utopias in which people have lived! That golden age which has gleamed before the eye of the seer, with seemingly only a step between him and it! We turn the pages of Plato's "Republic," of the perfect state which he constructed for his fellow citizens. It never came. Instead, in a few generations Greece had lost its liberties, had sunk under the foreign yoke, become swamped finally in

the barbarism which rolled over the world. Israel for centuries dreams of its kingdom, was never more sure of it than at the hour when Rome stepped in, trod down the sacred city and wiped out the nation. The early Christians had their vision of the Messianic appearances; we know what came of that. All through the middle ages man, the dreamer, was gloriously busy. The darker the actual the more splendid the ideal. Some, like Bernard, put it in the after life, in the celestial city, gleaming beyond the river of death. Others, more daring, predicted a speedy, miraculous upturn of existing conditions. In "The Eternal Gospel," a work of the thirteenth century, supposed to have been written by Joachim di Flor, we have a revolutionary religious programme full of a profound discontent and of an enormous hope. The Greek Church is declared to be Sodom and the Latin Church Gomorrah. In 1260 is to commence the reign of the Eternal Spirit, who is to redress all wrongs and bring in the perfected state. The weary ages as they rolled saw always their Jerusalem in front. The Reformation time was full of prophets of the new age. Germany has its Münzers, its Müllers, its Carlstadts, its Metzlers, who, starting from Luther's programme, proclaim the age of universal emancipation. It all ends in the peasants' war, in which the movement is trampled out in blood and fire. In England More writes his glorious Utopia, and goes himself soon after to the block. What dreams those Fifth Monarchy men had in Cromwell's time! And Cromwell, too, what dreams he had! He himself reaches the top, seems in a condition to realise them. The result? Let us hear him. "Would to God that I had remained by

my woodside to tend a flock of sheep rather than to have been thrust on such a government as this!"

Think of the French Revolution—the dream of it and the reality! Never such an event before or since in human history. The mass of us outsiders have never begun to understand it. We have read our Carlyle, our Burke, perhaps; have a sense of tremendous happenings, of Bastille stormings, of the reign of terror, of wholesale drownings, wholesale guillotinings. We think of the leaders, of Saint Just, Danton, Robespierre as monsters, drunk with blood. To get to know the thing itself you must go behind all that to the men themselves. Read their speeches, their writings, their personal memoirs. These men are all idealists! They thirst for perfection and fancy they see it coming. Surely there was never, since man began to be, so weird a contrast between the vision and the fact. Condorcet was writing his glowing chapters on human perfectibility when he was arrested for the guillotine—the guillotine which he escaped by poison. Robespierre began as the most ardent of humanitarians, with a horror of bloodshed. The blood that he and the others waded in afterwards was the Jordan they were crossing on the way to humanity's promised land. Amid all the orgies of the Terror what ideas are being given to the nation, what hopes kindled in it! We read this, in one of the decrees on public instruction, passed by the Convention in the terrible '93: "Finally, free from the old prejudices, and worthy to represent the French nation, you will be able to found on the *débris* of dethroned superstitions the one universal religion, the religion which brings peace and not war, which makes free citizens, no

longer kings or subjects ; a religion of brothers, no longer of enemies ; which has neither sects nor mysteries, whose sole dogma is equality, whose oracles are the law, whose pontiffs are the magistrates, and whose altar is our country." An orator of the Convention, Thuriot, in view of the approaching " Festival of Reason " to be celebrated in Nôtre Dame, urged that a memorial stone should be engraved " which should commemorate the glorious hour, and announce to posterity that it was on this day the last chain was broken which had held the human reason captive." These men were going to do away with war, they were going to do away with popes and priests. And in a few years Napoleon had signed the Concordat with Rome—Napoleon, who had turned the revolution into his own terrific engine of war !

The astonishing thing is that, with all this experience behind him, man is still full of his Utopias, and some of them so primitive, so naïve. Bebel is just dead, a prophet without a religion. This Moses of the German proletariat had for his unreached Canaan a Socialism which should inaugurate the human felicity by such a distribution of the world's goods as should secure to everyone his share, his mouthful. It is wonderful that so able, so sincere a man should be content with so limited an outlook. Did he never turn his eyes to the people who *have* this share, and so much more, to ask whether it had contented *them?* We think here of Mill's melancholy when he put to himself the question : " What if all that the people are contending for be finally secured to them, will that make them happy, will it make me happy ? " He could answer it only in one

way. Will a community of goods make men free, will it make them good, will it soften the anguish of bereavement, will it resolve the mystery of life, will it make death any easier? It seems as if man will have to be led through all the byways, and into all the quagmires, in order to learn—by that disillusioning experience which seems the only way of reaching his stupidity—where happiness, where life's real things do lie, and where they do not lie.

And as with the world at large, so with ourselves. We are all cherishers of our private Utopias, all hunters after a paradise we do not reach. Mme. de Chantal is speaking for us all in her saying: "There is something in me that has never been satisfied." A prosperous manufacturer was once describing to me the progress of his fortunes. "I began with nothing. I thought how happy I should be if I ever reached five thousand. I got it, and then put the figure at ten thousand. I have made that, and more, but do you think I am content?" And he shook his head. You meet men who look forward to retiring from business as the crown and reward of their career. They retire, and find what an emptiness that is. Happy if they discover some work—be it the cultivation of cabbages—some new interest, however humble, that gives their body and soul a chance of survival.

All this seems—at first sight at least—an astonishing, a confounding state of things. Why this eternal disillusion, this perpetual disappointment, this endless round of experiences, all with "vanity of vanities" as their summing up? Is there any sense or reason in it, anything but a mockery of human hopes, a denial of human happiness? Searching

questions, which remind us it is time now to look into the matter a little deeper. And the first glance must be a psychological one, a look into our make-up as personalities. It is a very simple reflection, and yet one which covers so much of the ground, that we are for ever unsatisfied, because that is part of our constitution. We are made to be that. Our make-up contains desire as one of its elements, and the one business of desiring is to be desiring. That is what it is there for, and it carries on its function just as the heart or the lungs carry on theirs. And the desire feeds on the unrealised, just as the lungs feed on air. Give it everything, and it will at once—for that is how it is made—ask for something outside everything. What is, is not its affair; that lies always in the thing that is not, that is yet to be. You can conceive of personalities without this element, but we are not in that category. We might be at some future time, but we are not that now. And so we have the paradox, that our very happiness requires, as part of its completeness, the desire to be happier still; our good has ever in it a craving for higher good. We are not a static but a dynamic; we are not a resting-place, but always a bridge, a transition to something more. Some day, in some other sphere, we may find an end, but for the present we are not the end but the journey. Our good is not in finding, but in seeking.

Note another thing here. Are we to commiserate the optimists, the prophets of the race, because they dreamed dreams that were not realised? But they were happy in their dreams. Those splendid visions, would they have been without them? Would Thales have missed his view of the stars, even at the

price of tumbling into the well? Is it a calamity to think of something better than we find? Is it not, on the contrary, our joy, our inspiration, the spur to our best energies? We tug cheerily at our tasks, yes, amid seeming hopeless conditions, glad in our turn to be numbered with those

> Who, rowing hard against the stream,
> Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,
> And did not dream it was a dream.

And note this further. We do not enter our paradise because, as we advance, it becomes, by this splendid law of our being, always a better, a higher than the one we set out to secure. We remain unsatisfied with the earlier consummation because we find that the universe contains still better things. We reach our Jerusalem, as some of the Crusaders did, and find it not good enough. That dusty, evil-smelling city on its stony height, will this do? No; and were it a city of golden streets, of marble palaces, still it would not do. The soul leaps at once from the material to the immaterial, to a Jerusalem which is from above, which descends to us out of heaven from God. It is from the infinite expansibility of the human soul, its capacity for the highest there is, that springs its present non-content. And no promise of good that could have been written for us on the heavens were surely comparable, both for its largeness and its sureness, to the sublime hope that our non-content kindles within us.

Meanwhile, as we are thus drawn onward, drawn by the immense demand of the soul, let us not despise or undervalue the paradise we have already

reached. Let us be happy in the happiness we have—the happiness that has this desire in it. Let us enjoy our incompleteness, and that because it is incomplete. Do not trouble about the sordidness of your conditions if the soul is not sordid. It is said of Heraclitus that strangers coming to visit him expected to find him in most imposing surroundings. Instead he was engaged in preparing his food with his own hands. To them in their amazement at seeing him in so menial an occupation, he remarked : " Here, too, gods are to be found ! " Noble souls ennoble their surroundings, make them into their paradise. Said Perpetua, the North African martyr, describing the prison into which she was thrown, to be delivered afterwards to the lions, " The gaol became to me suddenly a palace, so that I liked better to be there than anywhere else."

Perpetua's palace was her own soul. And for ourselves, whether our present dwelling-place be a prison, a hovel, or a mansion, our real habitation is always that inner one ; and whether it be noble or sordid is always an affair of its spiritual quality. Why trouble about our bricks and mortar ? Our habitation, whatever its size, is an inn, not an abiding place. The great thing is that we are on a journey, the most wonderful journey that ever was. What is behind us is astonishing enough, but that is only a preparation for what is before us. " Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come." For ever do we seek and seek ; for ever does our paradise recede as we advance. And for the reason that we are the children of the infinite, and nothing less than the infinite, in its height and depth and fulness, can be our home.

XVII

THE BURDEN

BUNYAN makes his pilgrim start out on his journey with a heavy burden on his back. What the burden consisted of was a something vastly more real to the Bedford dreamer than to the mass of people to-day. Yet the picture, if we say nothing of its religious aspect, is true for us all. Let our theology be what it may, or be non-existent, we are each on a pilgrim way, and each with a burden on his back. If we had a better eyesight than this poor physical one; if we could see the actual inward life of our neighbour, this burden of his would perhaps be the first thing to catch our view. It would be the strangest and most incongruous compound; but what would most strike us, in many, at least, of our fellows, would be its size and its weight. The coal-heaver, staggering under his loaded sack, is carrying a feather-weight compared with that which presses on many a slender enough looking passer-by. We have no weighing-machine that can give us these pressures. If there were, what a tonnage it would reveal! We get glimpses at times at what is going on. A look, a gesture, reveals it. You watch a merry party at its break-up. There has been an hour of hearty fellowship—at a dinner-table, round a club-room fire; for that brief hour everything else has been forgotten in the flow of a common, joyous

life. But watch one of those faces as they separate. A new look comes. The lines have become rigid, the smile has vanished. The man has remembered his load; he has once more shouldered his burden.

Unhappy is he with it? Not at all necessarily. It is more than likely he would be less happy without it. The change in him means that he has felt the tug, and is calling on his strength to meet it. It would be absurd to exclaim against burdens in themselves. You are built to carry them, just as ships are. And if you have ever been in a cargo-boat in ballast, with a high sea running, you will have realised amid all that rolling and tossing, the value of being weighted, if only as a condition of steadiness. That nature intended us to be weight-carriers, and to find our strength there, is evident from her whole scheme. She puts it on us a little at a time, but with a steady increase, until finally we are astonished at what we are carrying; astonished often, too, at the ease with which we are managing it. A man, arrived at his strength, burns to exercise it. It is not enough to fend for himself alone. He must marry, take on a household, a family; feed, clothe and house half a dozen others than himself. His business, whether big or little—sometimes because it is too big and sometimes because it is too little—is a constant pressure. And to-day people of sensitive minds are feeling, as never before, the weight of the world's burden. We are getting to know all that the world is suffering, and we suffer with it. We are at the pit mouth, with the entombed miners; at sea, watching the burning ship, the agony cooped up in it; in the crash of the railway accident; amid the starving women and children of the latest strike. We are

paying the price of the world's new, intimate knowledge of itself, and it is a heavy one. It is good for us and the world we should carry it, but it is distinctly a drain upon our strength. Every age and position of life carries its load, from which there is no escape. Childhood has its own, often a strangely piteous one ; middle age is an incessant tugging and panting ; and the last years need a new apprenticeship to their difficulties.

What are we doing with our burdens ? How are we taking them ? It is one of the fundamental questions in the answer to which lies so much of life's secret. There needs here a great discrimination. There are burdens we have no business with at all ; there are burdens we ought to carry, and do not ; there are burdens to carry in order to get rid of them ; there are so many burdens we are carrying the wrong way. It may be well to sort out some of these categories and see what they contain.

There are loads, and some of these of the heaviest, which people have no business with. In the days of the first rush to the Klondyke, when men had to face the terrors of the Chilcoot Pass, and of the rushing waters of the great canyon, many of the " tenderfoot " pioneers started with vast loads of superfluous baggage. The way up that terrific ascent was soon after strewn with heaps of these superfluities, cast aside in the toil of the climb. It is a picture of the way people load themselves for the longer journey of life. As if the actual burden imposed by nature were not enough, they construct a monstrous pile of self-created additions. They lend their imagination to the service of fear, and the two give them enough to carry. They fear the coming event,

twisting it into shapes of terror which do not belong to it ; blow it up into twice its size, and then cower shuddering under the phantom they have created. The greatest part of what they fear does not happen at all, and the thing that does happen is quite different from what they imagined. The blow falls, but the anguish you expected with it, where is that ? The crash, the loss, the *bouleversement* of conditions, is there, sure enough ; and often enough, you are laughing instead of crying at it. Life, after all, is an affair of feeling, and is it not true that some of our finest feelings—the confidence, the exhilaration, the up-leap of triumphant faith—have come just when the outside seemed darkest, when the thing we had dreaded has actually arrived ? The astonishing, the really unpardonable thing is that, after so many of these experiences and what they have shown us, we should ever dread another.

That is not the only useless burden. With numbers of people half their load will have fallen away when they have realised for themselves the supreme folly of pride, and of that slavery to convention which is born of pride. Take a present-day instance. The existing domestic difficulty, which is the despair of the modern household, will have disappeared when the middle classes have learned this lesson. The new insurgence of the servant class is surely a providential arrangement to teach us simplicity ! " You have twenty servants," said Dr. Parker once in one of his Thursday addresses ; " then you have nineteen plagues ! " He might have made it a score and have been nearer the truth. When well-to-do people have learned to do for themselves the things they have left to others, and to take a pride in doing

them, they will have found how much better it is to deal with things themselves, those things of the household—things which never talk back, which are always good-humoured, which always yield their return for honest labour—than to deal with stubborn wills, with laziness, incompetence, and the determination to get the most for doing the least. What is the matter, for your cultured woman—or your cultured man, for that matter—with handling a broom or with kindling a fire ? You are at least in contact with realities. Here is a gymnastic as good as any other. Old Heraclitus, cooking his own dinner, said to some visitors, astonished at his occupation, " Here also there are gods ! " Louis Philippe once asked what was the prime accomplishment needed in a king of France, replied, " That he should be able to black his own boots." It was a skit on the uncertainties of the position, but it is not a bad accomplishment for others than kings. We read of old Wilhelm of Prussia, the father of Frederick the Great, that in his constant journeys through the kingdom " he liked to sleep in a clean barn, and dine under a tree." He started each day's journey at three in the morning. Let a man, indoors or out, try simplicity, and we will wager he will get more out of it, in the sheer enjoyment of life, in mental stimulus, in a sense of glorious freedom, than out of all the luxuries and subserviences that pride and a corrupt taste have ever invented. Let those who think otherwise go their way ; only do not lose your self-respect and your joy of liberty by being imprisoned in their foolish ways and thinkings.

There are millionaires who complain of their wealth as a burden, though none of them seem over-

anxious to get rid of it. Assuredly, it will be a burden to a right-minded man; a good burden or a bad one, yet a burden. There are distinct deprivations in it. It removes him from so much of the simpler realities out of which life's finest emotions are extracted. And Cicero's word on accumulation for its own sake has surely sense in it: "Can anything be more absurd than in proportion as less of our journey remains to seek a greater supply of provisions?" Sense, too, in Seneca's word: "*Non qui parum habet, sed qui plus cupit, pauper est*" (Not he who has little, but he who covets more, is the poor man). In the present state of the world; of its poverty-stricken masses, to live at one's ease in Capuan luxury, argues a habit of mind only one remove from that of the mediæval baron who found an added zest in his barbarian banquets from the thought of the wretches groaning in his dungeons underground. But it is another story when we hear of men using their wealth as a trust, carrying it as a burden for others. There is a possibility, as Mr. Gerald Lee has taught us, of "inspired millionaires," men who have a genius not only for getting wealth, but also for using it the right way. Is it not better in their hands than in those of blockheads? And so many of us are blockheads. The mass of men are quite incapable of improving their condition. Their need is to have at their head leaders who have the genius and the power to think out and to solve the problem of these ungifted ones. Wealth in the hands of brains and of love is the happiest conjunction. The man who by honest and legitimate methods creates a great industry, giving thereby healthful employment to hundreds of workers,

creating for them happy homes, caring for them as father of a vast household, is assuredly one of the noblest of our burden bearers. It is one of the happiest of auguries that their number is increasing.

It will be by a combination of the world's best brains, its accumulated capital, and the spirit of service that we shall get rid of one of the world's cruellest and most shameful burdens—that of the poverty of the poor. While multitudes of us are on firm ground, high up, with nature's beauties all around us, and a clear sky above us, another multitude is down in the pit, shut out from all that, their feet sinking in the mire, involved in a desperate struggle to prevent being engulfed by it. Have we any idea what this poverty is? We turn to the United States, the land of boundless wealth, of enormous possibilities. In this Eldorado Mr. Robert Hunter, an American statistician, tells us that there are four million persons dependent on public relief; that an equal number are destitute but bear their misery in silence; and that ten millions have an income insufficient to maintain them in physical efficiency. We are told that in Boston, in 1903, over 136,000 people, or 20 per cent. of the population, were aided by the public authorities. One in every ten who die in New York is buried a pauper. That is wealthy America. In England the investigations of Mr. Booth and Mr. Rowntree have shown us the condition of things. And yet in England, to say nothing of the States, a modern economist assures us that with the science we now command, we can produce far more food, houses, clothing, furniture and other commodities than we actually need, and this while affording ample leisure for the workers. What is

lacking ? Brains and a good will. When we have ceased to be internationally mad, we shall give over spending over half our national revenue in destruction and the preparation for it. The sum saved would provide all the needed capital. But capital is of no use ; is a mere mischief unless we have intellect and the right will behind it. To put the power and the wealth indiscriminately into the hands of the mob—the dream of the modern Socialist—would be the biggest insanity of all. It would be a useful experiment to try it on a ship, with a committee of the crew and of the stokehole as navigators ! The world, fortunately for itself here, has had some similar experiments, and we know their results. During the French Revolution there were established State workshops, which, in Paris, occupied 31,000 workmen. A State control of industry ! The men, under this *régime*, arrived, we are told, at ten o'clock, and left at three. They spent their time in drinking and card playing. Quite recently, a few years ago, France furnished another experiment. Roubaix, one of its great manufacturing centres, was captured by the Socialists. The municipal authorities were composed largely of saloon keepers and newsvendors. They began by creating remunerative places for all their relatives. After a very brief period of power the electors of Roubaix realised that it required other qualifications than these to administer a great city, and there was an end of the Socialist municipality. It ended, as all such experiments must end, because they are against human nature and the laws of life. Human affairs can never succeed unless there is power and capacity at the head and obedience behind. To

get through the desert and into Canaan, seek first your Moses and your Joshua.

The burden—the world's burden and our own—is, we see, a strangely assorted compound. A vast deal of it is to be got rid of, and we can get rid of it. When all is done, however, in this direction, we shall still be burden-bearers. Nature has taken care of that. It is part of our life's inheritance. As Matthew Arnold has it, " And we feel, day and night, the burden of ourselves." The spiritual conflict, the sense of sin and unworthiness, our failures, " the little done, the undone vast," the growing infirmities, the mystery of death and of the future, all this does not cease its pressure. From one point of view it is our tragedy ; from another it is our hope and our inspiration. It is all the difference of having faith or being without it. To faith it spells simply the glory of our incompleteness ; of the want that drives us out of ourselves to find our refuge in God. Victor Hugo, in his " Religions et Religion," paints the despair of his time :

> Est-ce tout ? A quoi bon ? Quel choix dans la nuit noire ?
> Le hasard de nier, ou le hasard de croire ?

Ah ! if it were only a hazard ! But faith's venture, resolutely pursued, gets beyond that stage. The seeker finds. The pilgrim, toiling with his load, bemired with the Slough of Despond, reaches his place of deliverance, reaches a Helper who bears for him and with him. In that strength he goes on with new courage, with a joyous heart. He finds Hope for his companion, combats valiantly with Apollyon and Giant Despair, reaches his Delectable Mountains, is guest in Interpreter's house, traverses his Valley of Humiliation and finds it sweet, knows

his Beulah, is not afraid of the river of Death, for he sees behind it the gleaming pinnacles of the Celestial City. He has heard the great "Come unto Me;" he has "cast his burden on the Lord"! Happy they who, with their burden, have found the way to carry it, and the road to travel with it.

XVIII

ARE WE SANE?

It seems an entirely disagreeable, perhaps even an impudent question. Its suggestion of Bedlam as the proper place for us all: may not that be evidence that Bedlam is the appropriate place for the writer? Maybe, but he will take that risk. The proposition may be extravagant, but extravagances have their use. They are sometimes the only way of getting sense into people. We are so apt to think well of ourselves, to praise up our pretty little world and our precious selves as part of it, that it is good for our health to remember that a quite other view is at least conceivable. Let us imagine, for instance, that a complete outsider—a messenger, say, from Mars or some other extraneous planet—should pay us a visit and examine our civilisation as it exists to-day. We may suppose him as entirely intelligent, entirely reasonable; acquainted, moreover, with our accepted canons of reason; knowing what we accept as good and as evil; knowing what our best thought tells us, what it accepts as sanity; and observing, at the same time, the things we actually do. What, we ask, would his verdict be, and what would be the grounds for his verdict? That, at any rate, seems a sane proposition. He would find a goodly number of lunatic asylums—their number and population are largely increasing. Might he not conceivably go

away with the impression, and transmit it to his wondering trans-spatial audience, that our earth itself is a lunatic asylum; that 'tis indeed "a mad world, my masters!"

What would he find amongst us? He studies, for instance, one of our modern wars and its sequel. One people has a quarrel with another; it is perhaps over territory, or business, or some racial bitterness. They rush to arms; there is battle after battle, and scenes of inconceivable horror and devilry. Whole tracts are desolated, towns and villages are burned, women and children slaughtered, animals subjected to horrible tortures. Commerce and industry are stopped; everything that makes for life and happiness put back. Then, when each side is exhausted, bled to the white, a halt is called. Representatives of each meet round a board, discuss their quarrel, argue the matter out on terms of reason, of mutual give and take, come to an understanding, and take up again with peace and industry under these terribly reduced terms. But, he asks, if the matter is finally settled by reason, the only conceivable way, why did they not recognise this before? If reason is the only way now, was it not the only way then? Did it take all these rivers of blood to show them that fact? In the course of the war he notices a curious thing. Following the camps are hospitals with elaborate equipments, an array of people wearing red crosses. Their business, he finds, is to heal and save. The guns and rifles in front are busy maiming and destroying; and when that business is over these others are equally busy trying to undo the deadly work. The one set, in overwhelming proportions, are smashing up everything; the other are trying their hardest

to undo what the others have done. What is he to make of it all? Is it Bedlam?

From the fighters he comes to the people who are not fighting. He finds them all, the highest, the most civilised nations, engaged, at enormous, devastating cost, in preparing to fight. The money spent on these preparations, if used for agriculture, for manufacture, would abolish poverty and turn the earth into a paradise. He is told that these armaments are built and maintained to ensure the world's peace. He is surprised. He sees that unarmed people are the people of peace; that in communities where every man carries a revolver or a dagger there the most murders are committed. Is not that a truth for nations as well as men? And when you have brought your armies and fleets into play, will not the trouble have to be settled in the end, not by cannons and bayonets, but by that council board and the calling in of reason? Does the cannon ever settle anything or ever bring peace? He finds in actual existence a singular thing. Two great nations, who have fought each other of old, England and America, have now for a century tried the principle of unarmed peace and found it work perfectly. Between Canada and the United States there exists thousands of miles of boundary line. On the great lakes, which form part of the boundary, not a warship; along the vast stretches of mainland, not a regiment, not a sentry-box. And all goes well; no thought of aggression on either side. Here in England there were once seven kingdoms, all armed against each other. Now Wessex never dreams of arming against Northumbria. They can settle their affairs in a better way. And yet, as if all this did not

exist, as if it had taught no lesson, the nations go on arming, and ruining themselves in the process. They have not seen yet, with such plain object-lessons before their eyes, that if every ugly warship were at the bottom of the sea and all the swords done into ploughshares, the world in five years would double its wealth and double its happiness. Instead, they build more warships. Is it not a queer world?

He looks a little closer into our industries. Here he finds the workmen massed into one army, the capitalists into another. They are full of the notion that their interests are hostile; their camps are full of war-cries. Every now and then the hostilities break out into open war, and we have the strike. The mills are closed, the mines emptied of the coal winners, the trains cease to run. Everywhere confusion, enormous losses, starvation in the workers' homes. Then when everybody has reached the limit of wretchedness, a conference is called. Again the council board, where the opposing parties meet and talk matters over. After fighting, then reason. Of course, there was only one way of settling matters, by this process of reasoning. But, our inquirer asks, did they not know that before? Do these people never reason till their bellies are empty? Their reason was there, in them, at the beginning. Why had it to wait for its innings till all these other stupid, impossible ways had been tried? Surely this is a people with whom reason comes in last, where it appears spasmodically, at rare intervals. But is not that the way of things in Bedlam?

The odd thing, our observer would reflect, is that these people knew all these commonplaces ages ago. All their great religions had taught them. He

turns up an old book of the East, the creed of millions there. He reads in the "Dhamanapada": "For hatred does not cease by hatred at any time; hatred ceases by love, the old rule. Let a man overcome anger by love, let him overcome evil by good, let him overcome the greedy by liberality, the liar by truth." Christianity, he finds, has taught the same thing for ages. The watchword its Founder gave His disciples was, "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you and despitefully use you." In this, He said, they would be doing the will of their Father in heaven, who caused His sun to shine on the evil and on the good, who sent His rain upon the just and the unjust. This watchword is printed in all the Bibles, is read out constantly in all the churches, is known by heart to all the millions of Christian adherents. The Teacher Himself showed His certainty of this doctrine by His own conduct. He repudiated wrath as belonging either to Himself or to Him who had sent Him. When on the cross, suffering from the worst crime ever committed, He had nothing but love towards His assassins. The wrong done, He said, was not so much badness as stupidity. These poor people did not know what they were doing. The only thing was to forgive them. Their evil was to be warred on by love, the only way. This was nineteen centuries ago, and the world is still acting as though its persistent blood and murder system were the only sanity, and as though it were Christ who was insane. When Jean Mesler, the blasphemous French priest, declared that Jesus was Don Quixote and St. Peter Sancho Panza the orthodox world was deeply shocked. The reflection of our

Mars messenger would probably be, that the French ecclesiastic had put into words the actual belief on which Christendom had ever since been acting. It is only now really dawning upon us, and that in a faint and far off way, that Jesus, after all, may have been sane, and that it is the rest of us who lack sanity.

We have here introduced the question of religion, of Christianity. On this subject our visiting critic would make some curious discoveries. He would find what Christians had made of their religion, had made of its doctrine and of its practice. The Founder's doctrine, as taught and practised, had been that of forgiveness and love, good, by its sheer goodness, overcoming evil. It was what God did in heaven, what He did on earth. His followers, in a few centuries, had twisted this into an elaborate system of metaphysical assertions which had nothing to do with goodness or love, assertions, the belief in which was made necessary to salvation. Our Martian would be ready to say with the writer of "The New Word": "Falsehood is found in every religion, but only in Catholic Christianity is it the foundation of religion. The first word in Buddhism is 'Know,' the first word of Catholicism is 'Believe.' And the merit lies not in believing what is true, but in believing what is false." And through deluded centuries the notion has actually prevailed that this saving belief could be wrought in men by authority, by fear and violence. If the people who acted thus, the persecutors, the dogmatists, had had the faintest inkling in them of psychology, of the way the soul acts, such an attitude would have been impossible. They would have seen that you can no more make

a man believe by compulsion, in any of its forms, than you can by compulsion make him ten feet tall or give him a third eye. Belief is a result of evidence and of nothing else in this world. You can by authority make a man fear, and submit, and subscribe; you can only make him believe by giving him facts. Luther, in his best days, had clearly seen that. In his "Concerning the Bonds of Obedience" he says: "Therefore it is vain and impossible to compel by force this belief or that belief. Force does not do it. It is a free work in faith to which no one can be forced." As Schopenhauer puts it: "*Der Glaube ist wie die Liebe; er lasst sich nicht erzwingen*" (faith is like love; it cannot be forced).

But we are not, most of us, sane enough yet to see that. Our critic might go further in his investigation of doctrine, discovering, to his astonishment, that its further developments contradicted, in the most ghastly manner, the whole teaching of the Founder. In place of His doctrine of a loving God, who sent His rain on the just and the unjust, who overcame badness only by goodness, he finds a system dominating the Church for fifteen centuries, still extant in articles and catechisms, which makes God a hypocrite, whose goodness is simulated, is extended only to this life; who has, for the life to come, a horrible procedure in which a chosen few are elected to a life of bliss, while the mass, upon whom His sun has shone, are relegated to an eternity of hopeless torture. The most infernal system of ideas, surely, that ever entered the human brain! And this of the God whom Jesus proclaimed as overcoming evil only by good! We say with Voltaire: "*Ce n'est pas ton Dieu; c'est ton Diable.*"

From the thing we have made of Christ's doctrine our investigator turns to what we have made of His example, and here, too, his findings would be equally remarkable. He reads in the Gospels that Jesus was born into a carpenter's family, and was Himself a carpenter. He would suppose that those who, in all ranks of society, pay to Him religious devotion in the churches would regard this as giving to honest labour, in its humblest forms, a special dignity. Honour surely in this society, if nowhere else, to the man who earns his living by the sweat of his brow! To his astonishment, he would find that this rule in Christendom is observed in exactly the inverse order. The "best people," in the universally accepted phrase, are the people who do nothing. In these circles people are not received who soil their hands with work. To belong here you must be at least three or four degrees removed from the vulgarity of trade. Our visitor might go to a cathedral town and find there the residences of canons, of deans, perhaps of a bishop. They are the well-paid representatives of Jesus the carpenter. Are any of them on visiting terms with carpenters? Nowhere will he find the social demarcations more rigidly marked out. If Jesus came to these precincts with mallet and adze He would be shown the back door. You may, in the cathedral, hear orisons intoned, with correct clerical accent, to Jesus as a metaphysical idea; but presume that the actual life of Jesus has any hints upon social values or the social order, and you will find out your mistake. Was there ever a queerer world?

On the whole, we fear that our friend's report of us would be the reverse of complimentary. If we

are ever in our right mind it is only by fits and starts, with quick reversions to the old unreason. The Latin poet, he might say, in describing himself has described the race: *Videor meliora proboque, sed deteriora sequor* (I see and admire the better, but I follow the worse). Still, would his report be a correct one? We have imagined him here as on a cursory visit, in which he has had time to record only his first impressions. We who are of the race, and know it from inside, could add some elucidations and corrections. We might agree with him that we are not entirely sane, but we could add that we are on the way to sanity. A mind better than our own is evidently in charge of us, and leading us on towards its own level. It is constructing a kingdom of rationality in a being who began with faintest dawns of reason—a rude animal, dominated by brute instincts, derived from a still lower ancestry. Man as he is to-day is only half himself; still struggling with a coil of old insanities. History shows us his long struggle with them, his slow emergence from them. Perhaps the vividest idea of it in the old world is given us in the Greek drama. Æschylus, in the "Choephori," represents the triumph of the law of the *lex talionis*: "O great Parcæ, may Jupiter cause the triumph of the law that outrage shall be punished by outrage, that murder avenge murder, evil for evil." It is the law of the ancient time. So we see Agamemnon sacrificing Iphigenia, Clytemnestra her mother kills Agamemnon, the son of Agamemnon kills Clytemnestra, and the Furies pursue him for this murder. Then the poet, on whom the new spirit has dawned, in the "Eumenides" proclaims the abolition of this law. At the temple of Delphi,

whither Orestes has fled, Minerva dissuades the Furies from their vengeance. They now cry: "Let discord, insatiable of crimes, no longer make its voice heard; may the blood of citizens no longer dye the ground; may never again men become murderers to avenge a murder; may the interest of the state reign henceforth in all hearts. Be united, O Athenians, in a common love, in a common hate against the enemy."

That was a step towards sanity, but only a step. Man was still fumbling after the true formula of his humanity. That was reached when Jesus told His disciples to love not only their own race but all races, their enemies even, because God loved and cared for them all. The astonishing thing is now dawning upon us that not in the Church with its blood-stained history; not in theologies with their brutal affirmations about God and man; not in modern society with its hypocrisies, its make-believes; not in ourselves with our vanities, our jealousies, our constant lapses; but in Christ, in that life, teaching and example, is the only human sanity. That is why with a quite new accent and fervour of belief, we say that in Him the eternal came to birth, that in Him the Mind that was from the beginning, that through the ages wrought in our race to bring it from animal to man, discloses here its clearest, highest manifestation. And only do we approximate to sanity as, in word, and thought, and deed, we follow Him.

XIX

LINES LEFT OUT

THERE is a well-known child's book on religion with this title. Its purpose was to fill up what, in a previous publication, had been omitted. It is a suggestive title, which may carry us a good deal further than this first use of it. Left out! One could build a mountain range with what, in the world of print, has been left out. Think of all the letters to newspaper editors that never see the light! Think of the devastations daily wrought by the editor's blue pencil! Printing presses are roaring all the year with new publications. They would have to be multiplied a hundred fold if all the written manuscripts reached them, instead of the intervening waste-paper basket. And the unpublished is only a part of the matter. Your most voluminous author gives only a fraction of what he has thought and dreamed and begun at. Gibbon essayed a dozen subjects, and spent no inconsiderable time over them, before he settled down finally to the "Decline and Fall." Balzac was a terror to the compositors. His proofs were returned to them one mass of corrections, of lines left out, of new matter interleaved. Cries Stevenson: "Oh, if I knew how to omit!" Now he is gone we are glad he did not omit more. How we have all wondered over those lines left out

in "Edwin Drood," cancelled by the grim editor, Death! Sir Robertson Nicoll has given us an excellent study on the problem. But how we wish we had Dickens's own solution!

There is a vast deal more printed matter in the world than any of us can properly manage. On the whole, we may be glad of what has been left out. So much of it is superfluous, a mere copying, "a damnable iteration." Yet, despite this super-abundance, it remains that one of the outstanding defects of the current literature and of our public life to-day is in the lines left out, in the things that are not said and that should be said. Take our journalism. Of late we have been afraid to open our newspaper. Day after day the breakfast hour has been spoiled by its recital of horrors; horrors of the air, of the road, of the mine, of the sea. The latest catastrophe, the newest villainy; these are the first things that strike the eye. Heavens, what a world to live in! Yes, if that were the only news of it. It is the curse of the Press that this is the kind of thing it has chiefly to print. And yet what a fractional part all this of the world's real life! For fifty years yonder street has led its quiet, comfortless existence, with its homely traffics, its good cheer, its social joys, nothing of which has ever crept into your journal. Let a murder be committed there, and this, for the listening outside world, is the one history of that street. And so it is that in the Press, and in a more enduring manner, in history and literature, the world, without deserving it, gets a bad name. The solid happinesses of it are not good enough copy for your reporter, your dramatist. Some day we may get an inspired literature which shall make the

common life, with its enormous balance of good, so vivid, so interesting, as to outcharm the present vogue for the sordid and the horrible.

And when, in the world of politics, shall we get the "lines left out"? Our party system, as at present conducted, is immoral to this extent—that neither side will give us the whole truth of the matter. What a way of dealing with a nation's well-being, this of abusing and ridiculing your opponent, of omitting all the strong points of his case, and fixing the limelight on his weak ones! Who in his senses would go to the ordinary party leading article for the actual facts of a disputed question? Some day, one hopes, politics will cease to be a cockpit of fighting passions and personal ambitions; will become instead a real science, and proceed on the methods of science; the patient investigation, that is, of all that belongs to a subject, with nothing left out; leading to conclusions that fit the facts. But we are a long way off from that. We may have to wait still longer for an international politics that proceeds by the same rule. The old hatreds, still so rife, are so largely due to the lines left out. Englishmen used to hate Frenchmen, and Frenchmen Englishmen, because neither side knew each other. When we get on speaking terms; when we read each other's literature, we find our hearts are beating to the same tune. For generations American lads were brought up on school book histories which painted England as the enemy. It is only just recently that a better understanding has produced a better school book; one where the left out lines have been put in. The American is beginning to learn that it was not the English people, but the crass English Government,

a Government with a foreign and half-crazy king at its head, that was against their liberties; that the real England, represented by its noblest sons, by Chatham, and Burke, and Fox, and Conway, and Walpole, was on their side, all against the policy which brought on the final rebellion. To-day we are learning yet another lesson, a line left out of all the old political calculations; the lesson that the prosperity of one nation helps the prosperity of all, and that, consequently, the war that ruins one people is the surest way of ruining their conquerors. We are getting on by degrees, but how slowly! Future generations will assuredly see us all as on the dunce's form of the political school.

The world is progressing, with infinite slowness it is true, yet progressing towards a higher moral state. If we investigate the causes of that, we come upon some deep things. We have heard of manuscripts written with invisible ink; ink which only shows itself in certain conditions, when treated in a certain way. You heat it, or treat it with chemicals, and then the hidden writing appears. As we study human nature we find the soul of it written all over with invisible ink, with messages subtly wrapped up in its texture, which by degrees are becoming legible. Comte, in his "Positivism," argues that man's religion, in so far as it looked beyond earth, was only a phase, which would in the end yield to science, as he understood science. There are few scientists satisfied with Comte to-day. We see too clearly that were there not underlying all things, and before all things, a universal Reason, there could be no science; for science, in its every process and deduction, supposes that Reason, and leans upon it.

We think, because the universe thinks, has a mind at work. Science is the perpetual questioning of that mind and the reception of its answers. The answers are always coherent; if they were not we should indeed be in a fool-universe. Those lines, printed in us, of an inherent rationality, holding all things together, as they showed more clearly in the human consciousness, became the groundwork of science, its apparatus of proof.

But other lines have come into view. The soul which finds in itself those imprints of the rational, finds also imprints of something more intimate and more beautiful; imprints of a Personality that is loving and holy, and that seeks to form in us a likeness of itself. Whence come our ideals; our sense of the good and our yearning for it; the disgust at our moral failures, our thirst of perfection? They are the stuff of which we are made, and they point as surely to a fulfilment as the structure of the eye points to the vision which light brings to it. This consciousness, in vast numbers of our fellows, is a feeble enough affair; seems in many almost non-existent. It is well, on these matters, to think geologically, if only as a curb on our impatience. Could we have seen our earth in some of its early stages, when it was a chaotic, unformed mass, its atmosphere laden with mephitic vapours, its surface rent with hideous explosions, we could hardly have conceived of it as a place of quiet valleys, of running streams, the dream of beauty that it is. But the lines of all that were there, hidden deep down, and ready to appear in their time. Man is as yet in his unformed, volcanic period; his greater age is yet to come. The great thing is that God, who was in the

earth, forming it, is in the soul, and will work His will there. He is in those who do not yet recognise the fact. We are so much more than we know, and we cannot escape from God.

The wonderful thing about the spiritual life, so far as we know it, is the lines that are left out. There is enough in it for faith and hope; but the silences with which it is encompassed! We have spiritual instincts, impulses, suggestions, hints, and all around them this vast, uncanny reticence! The star-strewn heavens look down upon our catastrophes, our disappointments, our deaths, as it seems, all unheeding. We ask our questions, and they yield no answer. Man, impatient, urges his doubts, propagates his infidelities, falls into moody pessimisms, and still no answer. His conversation with the sky seems entirely onesided. His passionate appeal is without response. So we say—in our bad moments. When we are better inspired we discover we have been looking in the wrong direction. Augustine, after passing through that agony, found this out. "I was looking for Thee without, and lo! Thou wast within." For it is in man himself that God is working towards His fuller expression, that He is planting the clearer knowledge of Himself. And in man the lines are coming more and more plainly into view. When we have reached the true knowledge of ourselves, we shall have reached the true knowledge of the universe. When our sight and our hearing are purged, have reached their higher powers, we shall see and hear Him there in a new fashion.

This is the lesson which Christianity offers us, the lesson that God is, above all things, to be found

in man. It shows us, in the earlier human history, the God-consciousness coming to itself in patriarchs and prophets, souls spiritually sensitive, awake to the whispers of the hidden voice. Then comes a Son of Man, in whom the voice is clear and positive, the vision unclouded, whom the race, by a sure instinct, is learning to follow, as exhibiting in His life and teaching the surest image of what God is, and of what He means to our race.

But here, as in nature, the marvellous thing is, with the new hope, the reticence which surrounds it. The lines that appear, bright with a glory truly divine, are what first strike us, filling responsive hearts with faith and gladness. But immediately we are set pondering over the lines left out. We know so much of Jesus and yet so little! We have His history in four little pamphlets which came into the world almost anyhow. Justin Martyr, the philosopher whom they converted, calls them "barbarian writings." Two of them, Matthew and Luke, are largely borrowed from the third, Mark. The borrowings are from a mutilated copy which seems at the time to have been about the only one in existence. Of the 400 days to which the ministry, at the shortest estimate, must have extended, we have in these pamphlets, at the most, a narrative of not more than forty separate days. And, as Professor Caird says, we owe those records to the narrow Jewish Church, a debt, he adds, greater than that we owe even to St. Paul. "For it did not pass away till it had gathered together those records of the early life of Jesus according to the flesh, in the absence of which even the teaching of St. Paul would have become little better than an abstract dogma."

Lines Left Out

As we study the writings that have come to us in this strange fashion—that have, as it were, fortuitously dribbled into the world—we are continually fronted with this mystery of the lines left out. Jesus has thrown upon certain questions a dazzling light. Upon a thousand others there is no illumination. It is brought up against Him that He knows nothing, apparently, of modern science, of modern philosophy, of modern economics. No one goes to the New Testament for mathematics, or chemistry, or biology, or painting or music. There is no exposition here of international law, of the government of states, of monarchism, or republicanism, of capital and labour, of a hundred things that agitate the modern mind. On whole ranges of theology, which our later scribes have filled with their propositions, on human origins, on Biblical inspiration, on Church orders and governments, there is no decisive word. What you have is just Himself, His life, His conversations, His death, and the wondrous things that followed His death. So much, and then the blank.

Does this blank stagger us? It need not. The economy here is exactly the economy we find in nature. So much given, and the rest left. The helps given to us have always these wide unfilled margins. They are the exercise grounds where we are to help ourselves. "Here," says the Word to us, "is your hint; now grow by following it out." What would have happened had Jesus filled out these other programmes? Supposing He had talked science? If it were modern science, it would to His auditors have been as incomprehensible as though He had talked Chinese. If it were level to their

existing notions it would all have been outgrown. All this was not His business; and for the reason that it is our own. For the human progress is not so much through the thing learned as by the effort of learning it; the effort, and all that effort brings to us. His work is other and deeper. It is not at the circumference but at the centre. He is not in life's details, but in life itself. He gives you no technique of science or art or industry, but He gives you the spirit in which all these should be pursued, the end for which they should be followed. He shows us just what nature means, what life means, the Mind that is behind it, how that Mind works, what its disposition is, the spirit it is of. We see all that in Himself, and as we see it we feel the truth of the presentation. Our soul says this is what God must be, for it responds to all our deepest soul feels as best; the qualities of being and doing which draw our worship. In Him we discover the secret of God; the secret that God is love, and that His love is of the quality that suffers, sacrifices, pardons, serves, and will be content with naught less than saving and perfecting. Jesus, you say, has not taught the world this or that? No, but He has done so much more. He has inspired the whole business of learning and the whole business of doing; inspired it so that every art and every industry under that influence becomes holy, and secretes a joy which, without Him, it could never yield.

Some of us, who have fared far in the journey of life, who have busied ourselves with its varied cultures, who have tested its chief experiences and appraised their values, have come as a result to one assured conviction. Christ is the heart of the

mystery, the key to it all. And life's best business, in the Church or out of it, is to work in this heady, tempestuous civilisation of ours for the restoring of that line, now so largely left out, the line of the Christ character, the Christ life; to work for that, knowing it is the world's only health, its true sanity. And how shall we do that? How else than by having the lines of that glorious portraiture all reproduced and showing in ourselves? For so essentially divine is that portraiture, that wherever, and however feebly, men see it reflected in their neighbour, they see in it some hint of the heart of God.

XX

OF SELF-EXPRESSION

THE modern cry for self-expression is a puzzling, even a confounding phenomenon. There are such confused, such contradictory elements mixed up in it. Almost the whole gamut of sentiment is represented there, from the highest to the lowest. You may find in it tragedy, comedy, and even farce. The cry in itself seems simple. "I want to be myself; to have liberty and opportunity for all that is in me to grow up and show itself; to be rid of the thousand things that now hamper and repress my development." What can be more reasonable than that? Whether it be the cry of Nora in Ibsen's "Doll's House;" or that of the underfed, underpaid worker, slave to his machine; or that of the independent thinker, born into a repressive, unsympathetic *milieu*, how reasonable, how even pathetic it seems! As we hear the cry, we realise how, in what are called the freest countries, the problem of liberty is as yet so largely unsolved; how supremely difficult it still is for men and women to be themselves! And the question is infinitely complicated by the false cries that are abroad. Before we can make progress here there has to be cleared away an enormous confusion of issues. We want first to know what is the true self-expression, and, on the way to that, the

specious counterfeits of it that are continually being offered.

The age we have been born into shows, in this matter, a queer condition of things. It is a condition seemingly dead against independence. We are, we discover, in a very old world, a world which has apparently been occupied for its past thousands of years in deciding beforehand for us what we shall do and be. The world is not an open country, but one crowded with boundary walls, with trespass notices, with restrictions here, and prohibitions there ; with law, religion, custom, fashion, all issuing their separate ukases ; all, as it seems, frowning down upon that daring imp of our own personality, and defying it to assert itself. Rousseau, whose cry of protest shook his world to its foundations, compared the modern man, ensnared in these conventions, to a child who from his birth is trussed, bound, fettered and unable to use his own limbs. He called for a return to nature, without, however, leaving us with any clear idea of what that means. A century and a half have rolled away since, and we are still groaning. Indeed, for multitudes the economic and industrial conditions of to-day have placed a still more effectual bar against any considerable self-expression. What chance is there of that for a man whose bread depends on performing thousands of times a day one single mechanical operation, perhaps the tenth part of the manufacture of a pin or of a shoe! How is he going to be anything but a machine, or the part of a machine, himself ?

The vast unrest among modern workers, where it originates in a desire to give their better self a

chance, despite the menace it brings with it, is a hopeful symptom. It will work out into some changes in our social and economic system which will be of an all-round and helpful kind. But the search for independence, for a freer self-expression, not in one class only, but in all, which is characteristic of our time, is, of all quests, the one where we may make the most mistakes and go farthest astray. The road is full of pitfalls, of bypaths that lead to precipices. Before starting out here we need to ask ourselves some questions. What self in us is it that we want to give a chance to? by what means do we propose to give it that chance? and what are we expecting from it as the goal of our hopes? It is supremely interesting to watch the answer that men to-day are giving to these questions, giving them, generally, not so much in words as in their actions, in the directions they are following. In studying them we get a view of the amazing complexity of the human soul, of its contradictions, its illusions, its range of self-deception; of the enormous difficulty, in some natures especially, of reaching the depths where the true self resides.

An illustration of the wild aberrations possible on this question is furnished by a school of writers, largely Continental, which still has its vogue, who argue that for a proper exposition of life, in the drama and in fiction, a man must have gone through all the experiences which he seeks to depict. To paint vice accurately—and so much of their painting is of that *genre*—he must know it intimately. One of this school declares that Shakespeare could never have written his dramas if he had been respectable. To understand gutter life you must first lie down in

the gutter. Most of these teachers have followed their prescription. It would, perhaps, be more correct to say that they began with their passions and then sought a philosophy which would fit them. And assuredly they have here succeeded in giving a true expression of themselves. Their writings exhale the corruption of diseased souls. But is their definition of experience here a true one? Can we only know the world's evil by wallowing in it? Teachers who affirm this, if they are not obfuscated by their own way of living, would see the absurdity of the contention. You might just as well say that a man could never become an Alpine guide, an experienced mountaineer, except by the process of tumbling down every precipice he came to. But is that the way? Or has he not become what he is, not by breaking his bones, but by learning how, in the face of all the dangers, to keep them unbroken? If this were a true philosophy our physicians would gain their knowledge by catching all the diseases they deal with; would learn the dangers of alcohol by getting drunk every night! And yet this is the talk that passes current to-day in some art critic and literary circles, amongst people who speak patronisingly of "conventional morality," of "bourgeois ethics," as of something that, with superior people, went out of date with the Victorian era. When you ask what these "bourgeois ethics" are, you find they are the ethics of clean living, which these people have long since forsaken. All this, of course, is a kind of self-expression. But the expression is that of the satyr, whose bestial leer shows through the works of these latest worshippers, a leer whose essential ugliness no literary device can hide.

A more subtle question arises when, in this matter of self-expression, we come upon the problem of the different personalities that at times seem to inhabit us. You survey a man's career and at varying periods of it you might be in contact with different men. Or at the same period you shall have two opposites at war with each other. Renan declared that of himself. One part of him was always contradicting the other. Walt Whitman met the accusation of inconsistency in a characteristic manner. "I am large," said he; "I contain multitudes." Sainte Beuve in his later days declared that half a dozen people had successively lived and died in him. Meredith has been quoted as making the same assertion about himself. And he adduced this, curiously enough, as a reason for disbelief of any survival after death! "Which of these personalities is to survive?" he is reported to have asked. If this is meant for an argument it is a singularly weak one. The obvious reply was: "But here are you who have actually survived them; and are you not the same 'you' all the time?" The feeling of identity is in these cases always stronger than the feeling of change. Do we not, in old age, feel our youth; live in it more intensely even than when we are young? And may we not conceive an after state, when all we have passed through, all the changes that have passed in us, shall subsist, in their essence, as part of the one life? Myers, in his "Human Personality," raises here some fascinating problems; questions of dual or triple personalities, existing and expressing themselves in the same ego; the question as to whether the being who thinks,

feels and wills in each of us, is not the survival of one out of many personalities that have struggled in us for supremacy.

In the search, then, for the self to which we are to give a chance; which we are to strive with all our might to develop; which we are at all costs to try and express, it is clear we are in face of some difficulties. Of all the complexities in this universe, we are the greatest complex; the greatest, at least, that we know. In this business there are such qualities of material, of diverse, heterogeneous material, that we can use. What of it *shall* we use? Amid the confusion one thing emerges with clearness. We can none of us come to good so long as we stand only for our separate self. The man who fights for his individual ego—whether you call his motive ambition, or greed, or vanity, or passion, or self-interest—however brilliant his powers, however indomitable his industry, will never count for much in the world's history, or for much as an exponent of life's blessedness. It was said of Napoleon, one of the biggest of this kind of experimenters, "No great principle stood by him." It is a damning indictment wherever applied—an indictment which, while it condemns, reveals. It shows, as with the flash of a searchlight, the futility of attempting to express a self which goes no farther, no deeper than our surface egotism.

And here come we to the central point, down to the real secret of life. The one and only self we can afford to express is that higher self, found in the holy place of the temple buried in us; which is of us, and yet so much more than ourselves; the principle of unity between us and our fellow, between

us and the universe outside; the self which shows in us as principle, as conscience, as ultimate moral authority; the self whose voice is ever the highest authority, recognised by us as the whisper of God. It is when we have recognised this "categorical imperative," this law which is in us, but is also beyond and above us, this duality in unity which makes the true man; it is then we find our place in the world, our work in it, our liberty and joy. We learn the liberty that is in obedience, the only liberty worth the name. "We are servants of all the laws that we may be free," says Cicero. Yes, when the law rests on this deepest foundation. To get God's will done in us and by us; for this end to cultivate all our powers to finest use; to get it done by our action, by our influence, by our suffering, by all that belongs to our life—this is the self-expression of the Christian. It was the self-expression of Christ, an expression so clear in its revelation of an infinite within that men ever since have been reading in it the character of God.

What is the man of this type going to do with all the laws, institutions, codes and conventions with which he finds himself surrounded? He will obey a great many of them, even seeming trivial ones, not simply because society has commanded them, but because they are good. When our feminine militants strike against laws because they have had no hand in making them, they should remember that the mass of laws which both the men and women of to-day are under were not made by any of us, men or women, now living; they were there long before we were born. They might remember, also, that these laws, for both sexes, are not so much coercive

as protective. Women, as well as men, would have had small chance to-day had they come into a world without them.

And yet the world's greatest spirits have figured often enough as opponents of human law! Again and again we see them setting the might of their personality against a whole system of regulations, of customs, of authorities. Socrates attacks the Athenian orthodoxy, and drinks the hemlock; Jesus puts His "I say unto you" against the old religion and is condemned by the Church authorities; Luther, with his "Here stand I; I can no other," fronts the whole might of the empire and of the hierarchy; Bunyan breaks the Conventicle Act and finds himself in Bedford Gaol; Wesley, contrary to episcopal authority, takes to field preaching, and is cast out of the Establishment. Here, you may say, is disobedience, here is a defiance of the established order; here is a tremendous self-assertion, a pitting of the single ego against the whole system held as authoritative and sacred. And this is a self-assertion held to-day everywhere in honour; the rebels have become consecrate. Why, then, shall we not rebel, break laws, or windows, if we want to?

In all this we need to see the one thing that matters. The great deeds, the great lives we have cited, meant always one thing. And that one thing was not disobedience, but obedience. The great spirits of the past were law-breakers because in a higher sense they were law-keepers. They acted and suffered not in self-will, but under the imperative of a higher will. Servants were they of a new law, whose light had flamed into their souls, whose august voice they felt they must obey. They obeyed,

too, not by violence, not by acts of paltry mischief, but by the proclamation of the truth that had reached them; by words and deeds which that truth inspired. Humanity, in its movement towards the highest law, will, it would seem, need still its rebels and outcasts of that type. But for all of us, heroes of achievement and sacrifice, or humble toilers of the common way, there is, we say again and finally, one only true way of self-expression—it is that of being rooted in God; or making our daily life the outcome of the divine that is within. John Smith, the old Cambridge Platonist, pictures for us the blessedness of the man who has thus found himself. "He moves in a larger sphere than his own being; and cannot be content to enjoy himself, except he may enjoy God, too, and himself in God."

XXI

THE SOMETHING ADDED

It is notorious that the presence or absence of some one element, quite insignificant it may be, in itself, will make or mar the most elaborate combination. The *chef* knows that the pinch of salt, more or less, is vital to his sauce or *ragout*. It has been said that it is to the presence of dust in the atmosphere that we owe our blue sky. Without it the heavens would be black at noon. The physiologists tell us that in the 2,000 atoms in a molecule of hæmoglobin, the colouring matter of the blood, there is one atom of iron. Without that one atom our life could not go on, for it is its presence that gives the body the power to oxygenate the blood. There is a piquant remark of Mlle. de Scudéry which, in another sphere of things, illustrates the same point. "There is," says she, "a something, I know not how to express it, which causes the presence of a gentleman to divert a company of ladies more than the most amiable woman in the world can." The solitary male, in view of the French lady, appears to be the dust in the air that reveals the blue sky, the iron atom that makes the feminine blood circulate.

One could multiply these examples. They meet us everywhere. There are so many failures that

are so near success. We say of them, " a little more, and how much it is ; a little less, and what worlds away ! " We see men dowered with many gifts, yet who somehow miss the mark. There is just that pinch of salt lacking in their temperament which would have made the whole thing go. Why are there not more happy people in the world ? There is such a vast apparatus of happiness around us. Every natural act has its own pleasures wrapped up in it. Eating and drinking, sleeping and waking, washing and bathing, walking, riding, sitting and lying down, hearing and seeing, talking and thinking, reading, working, resting, solitude, society, all these are in themselves enjoyments, or may be made such. The late Sir James Paget, from his vast surgical experience, averred that even dying, as a natural act, had its own quiet pleasure. Wealth is supposed to contain a vast sum of delights, and there are more wealthy people in the world than ever before. And with it all, and amid the well-to-do classes not less than among the ill-to-do, there seems never to have been so many discontented people. Are they asking too much of life ; more than it has to offer ; or is there the pinch of salt lacking in themselves ?

Assuredly, the nature of things has a good will towards us. If it were not so, how comes it that pleasure is so deeply inwrought into all we are and do ? But nature does everything by halves ; she never offers the complete thing. And that for an evident reason. Her whole attitude is a call upon ourselves. She is here, as apparently her chief object, to create our personality. And thus it is that she has placed life, its success or failure, so largely

in our own hands. If anything is to come of it, there must be our own contribution. As Mme. Swetchine has it: "Life means mainly what we put into it." Our own day is living largely on a mistake. It looks for its well-being in a something added, but it is the wrong something, a something from the wrong direction. What people seem everywhere after is an addition from the outside, a "more" in the shape of money, of society, of excitement, amusement, of pleasures so called, pleasures elaborately manufactured. The additions from this quarter of late have been, and are, increasingly abundant. Every week brings its new sport, its new fashion. There is an unparalleled cult of luxury. Our hotels, our steamships, our railway carriages are full of new inventions in comfort. The world was never so well off. Would anyone say that with all this there has been a commensurate increase in joyousness? Never since man began has the croak of the pessimist, the wail of the discontented, been so insistent. And the reason is not far to seek. For all this is simply to begin at the wrong end. The something added, that is of real consequence here, is a something added to ourselves, a something that comes not from without, but from within; or where it is from without, is from above us, and not in the things around us. It is in the development of character, in an increasing clarity of vision, in an insight that goes through the apparent down to life's bottom, fundamental values, that we reach the general satisfactions; that we learn to say, "How good life is!" To have cultivated in yourself the faculties of faith, of hope and of charity; to have discovered

the enduring joy of ordered industry ; to have found the beauty of things simple and common ; to have struck on the magnificent ideas that lurk behind the everyday facts ; all this may have made no great difference to your banking account. It will have made all the difference to your appreciation of life.

These things are not to be obtained or exchanged for currency. If they were, and if a jaded world knew what they brought to their possessors, there would be a rush for them, with quotations beyond all that the Stock Exchange has experience of. What their value would be is happily expressed by De Quincey in his estimate of Goldsmith : " He had a constitutional gaiety of heart . . . a knack of hoping, which knack could not be bought with Ormus and with Ind, nor hired for a day with the peacock throne of Delhi." It is the change in ourselves that changes the world. Every outside thing takes shape and colour from the idea you put into it. You make it by what you think it. It is a fact which every cross section of life you cut into reveals. John Nelson, the Yorkshire Methodist, shut into a stinking dungeon for preaching the gospel, declared that he enjoyed himself there more than had he been in a palace. His religious faith had created his palace for him. Woolman, the American Quaker, on one of his mission journeys, lost at night in a wood, with no fire and with rain falling, says he sat under a tree, " and had a very sweet meditation on the love of God." His soul furnishes his fire and light. The other day the newspapers had the account of a royal princess who, forsaking the splendour of a Court, had chosen the career of a hospital nurse.

And she would have no exemptions. She would scrub floors with the rest. Is there anything bizarre or quixotic in that? We find nothing quixotic in it. It shows an entirely sane measurement of values in one who had tried both kinds. The princess had found what luxury and pomp and artificiality had to offer the soul, and she had tried what simplicity and comradeship and honest toil in the service of others had to offer; and she had no doubt as to the verdict.

A single idea of this sort, if we can get it well into our heads—and nature tries so hard to get it into us—is enough to turn a bad world into a good one. Christ's "I have overcome the world" is the word not for Himself only, but for every one of us. The world, in its hardness, its roughness, its million difficulties, is there just for us to conquer.

> . . . Life's just the thing
> To try the soul's strength on; educe the man.

Professor Marshall, in his "Political Economy," says: "One new idea, such as Bessemer's chief invention, adds as much to England's productive power as the labour of a hundred thousand men." Wonderful, indeed, are ideas in that region of things. But whether Bessemer's idea could make either himself or his hundred thousand men happier is another question. It is ideas in a different direction, native to another side of the soul, that are needed for that. There are such ideas, and they are not less mighty in their action than that of Bessemer.

Take, for instance, the position of multitudes of people among us to-day, who find themselves irked and depressed by an uncongenial society. They find in themselves an innate superiority to the

people they associate with. They have ideals their companions have no use for; a refinement which is perpetually wounded by their coarseness. Their soul's deepest note finds no echo. They are alone in the midst of numbers. Perhaps *you* are there in that position. How are you taking it? There are two ways. You may take it as an evil fate which has cast you, so delicate a plant, into this uncongenial soil. But suppose, instead, that for an experiment you took on the idea of life as a sphere for service where, both in heaven and on earth, the higher give themselves to the lower; a service in which ministering spirits from the heavens occupy themselves here below with humble souls; in which the Christ "pleases not Himself," but lives on this earth, the friend of publicans and sinners. Suppose you see in every gift you possess the Christ claim on you to use it in His way; suppose that in the hours when the world's rebuffs, its unkindness, its ingratitude strike hardest on you, you find in the midst of it all the way of retreat into His spirit, the peace of that sure refuge! In this choice of ideas the outward positions are exactly the same. But the difference to you, how vast! The spiritual idea, if you choose that, will be, so far as you are concerned, a bigger one than Bessemer's. The one turns iron into steel; this other turns the world from a prison house to the glorious kingdom of God.

In every region of things life's call is ever the same —always for the something added, the something *you* can add. And it insists on your adding it on the peril of dead failure; insists because its whole object is to get your personality in motion, to develop it by using it. Take, for instance, the question of later

age, the time when youth and passion are gone. There are men who find what remains a mere vacuity, a dreary realm of prose. James Mill found it so. Benjamin Constant puts it explicitly: "When the age of passion is over, what else can you desire except to escape from life with the least possible pain?" The Frenchman is repeating here, almost in the same language, what Anacreon had said long ages before. One wonders what a man like Wesley would have said to talk of this kind; or Channing, who found in old age life growing ever fuller, ever happier! Walter Pater, in "Marcus the Epicurean," suggests the true order here, where in Cornelius Fronto he pictures an old man who constantly makes up for the decay of the physical "by an added grace of culture." Only, one needs more than culture, in the common sense of that term. For it is precisely when the heats of youth are over that the soul finds the opening for its own greater activities. Life's business there is like gold mining in the Klondike. At the beginning the ore is found on the surface; it is there almost for the picking up; later that easy processs serves no longer. The treasure lies deeper down. It is buried out of sight, and only those who are prepared with mining apparatus, who can bore and drill into the depths, can hope to find it. But there is more there, underneath, than ever lay on the surface. The men of mid age or old age who exclaim against the poverty of life are simply exhibiting the poverty of their own souls. They are on the top of a gold reef, but too lazy to develop in themselves the means of reaching it.

Religion is always a call for the something added; its speciality is that it is always a venture. People

wonder sometimes that it offers no more positive proofs ; that it leaves such monstrous wide openings for doubt ; that its evidences are not more commanding. Have we not here the reason, that the soul's vitality, its courage, demands a risk ; that it can only find itself in dangers, in leaps in the dark ? Fichte has finely put this aspect of it. " If," he says, " a man is to find the witness for the soul, immortality, and God at all, he must find it in himself, and in the spiritual history of his fellows. He must venture in freedom the belief in these things, and find their corroboration in the contribution which they make to the solution of the mystery of life. One must venture to win them. One must continue to venture in order to keep them. If it were not so they would not be objects of faith." And the freedom here demanded is a free action of the will. It is interesting on this point to note how J. S. Mill, brought up amongst the necessitarians, is compelled by the logic of life towards the same conclusion. Says he : " The doctrine of free will, by insisting on a truth which the necessitarian neglects, the power of the mind to co-operate in the formation of its own character, has given to its adherents a practical feeling much nearer to the truth than has generally (I believe) existed in the minds of necessitarians." The possessions of faith are not for the man who sits down and waits to be convinced. They are rather a kingdom that " suffereth violence," where " the violent take it by force."

In every direction it is the something added that makes the difference. Scenery is one thing or another, according to the soul you carry to it. Have you never seen the Alps in England ? You can

see them, if you will, in all their glory—in the clouds. You can see in turn Mont Blanc, Monte Rosa, the lovely Weisshorn, the stupendous Matterhorn. Only a little imagination, and the picture is there, not even to be improved on by the reality. It is in the idea that your health largely lies. You can frighten yourself into illness; you can dare yourself into health. Often in overwrought moments you say, "I must give way." And faith says, "Courage, go on!" The vital force in you hears that note, welcomes it, allies itself with it, and the two together win out. Napoleon walked through the plague-stricken wards at Acre to show there was no infection for the man who did not fear it. Hospital nurses know that there is their greatest safeguard. To mean to win is always half the victory.

One can never say how much, here on earth, is yet to be added to the soul's life. Henri Perreyve, that French priest of the beautiful soul, speaking from his experience, held that five or six pure men, living and working together, of one heart and one soul, with one object in view, could develop a common force of thought and feeling which reinforced each separate member with the united power of the others. Strindberg relates of a French nobleman and his wife whom he knew that their union was so intimate and so perfect that, when at a distance, anything happening to the one became known to the other. Were it a pain or a joy, it was immediately shared. There are magnetisms, currents of force vibrating in the ether of the spiritual world, deeper and more subtle than the Hertzian waves of wireless telegraphy. Who shall say, as souls develop and become more perfect receivers and transmitters, what new deeps of

thought and feeling will here be opened? And all that is coming to man here makes us turn with a new ardour of wonder and of hope towards the vast possibilities of death; makes us ask with a new eagerness Browning's question:

> When earth breaks up, and heaven expands,
> How will the change strike me and you
> In the house not made with hands?

XXII

GRACE

In the history, one may say the romance of words, there has surely been no more singular fortune than that which has befallen the word "grace." In its origin it stands for beauty, sheer beauty, beauty in all its forms. But who now, in religion, in theology, in the common pulpit use, thinks of it in that sense? For long ages past theology has appropriated this word, and in the handling has warped, disfigured and degraded it. One may say that it is the most ill-used word in the language. And the misuse of it has been not only a treason to the word, but a treason to religion, and to humanity. From the original and only true meaning of it as expressing all that is bright, winsome and lovely, it has, in ecclesiastical hands, come to stand for all that is hard, narrow, terrifying, and hideously sectarian. Ask a Scotchman, brought up on the Westminster Catechism, what is meant by "the doctrines of grace," and his mind goes back to decrees of predestination, of election, of reprobation, of final perseverance; to a system of belief which makes humanity the subject of a fate which, before they were born, secured for a favoured number of them an everlasting salvation, and condemned the rest to a certain damnation. Ask the Catholic, Roman or Anglican, what is meant by grace, and he tells you of something which reaches you through a

rigidly protected and exclusive system of sacraments. You are saved from wrath by baptism, by the Communion, administered to you by a priest. The priest is thus empowered by his ordination. This ordination has become valid by being received at the hands of a bishop, and the bishop's power is derived from an unbroken apostolic succession. Grace, in this view, is a something whose communication suggests a system of pipes, as though it were Standard oil—the strict monopoly of a caste. On all sides of the Church grace has been construed in terms of exclusion, with a menace behind it, like a flash of light on a thundercloud. As we think of the way in which this high-born word has been mishandled, tossed about as the war-cry of theologic controversy, mouthed as the cant of a vulgar religious phraseology in a way which savours of Stiggins and Chadband, we are reminded of the career of a racehorse which, from the first position in the equine world, has come down to the drawing of a mudcart, and finally to an end in the knacker's yard.

Theology owes to this word a great reparation. And this can only be given by a cleansing of it from all the soilures that ignorance, narrowness and party passion have brought upon it, and by a restoration of it to its own original and noble meaning. We get it from the Latin *gratia*, the French *grâce*. And these are translations of the Greek *charis*. When, in the New Testament, the Apostle gives the solemn benediction, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you," he uses this word *charis*. And what is *charis?* It stands, we say, in classic Greek, just for beauty, beauty in all its forms. It is for one thing external beauty, and that specially which is expressed in the

human body. The Greeks had a worship of this embodied beauty in the three graces, the *Charites*, Aglaia, Euphrosyne, Thalia, the symbols of human loveliness. From the body they transferred it to the mind and soul. In Plato's " Phædrus," Socrates addresses a prayer to the gods : " Grant me," he says, " beauty in the inward soul and may the outward and inward man be at one." In the " Laches," grace is conceived as a harmony, the soul's music. " And such an one I deem to be the true musician, attuned to a fairer harmony than that of the lyre, or any pleasant instrument of music." And the way in which this grace of beauty mounts from the lower to the higher, from the external to the innermost and noblest expression, is given us in that magnificent passage of the " Symposium," where love, as the following of the true beauty, passes from stage to stage till it reaches it divinest height. " And the true order of going or being led by the things of love, is to use the beauties of earth as steps along which he mounts upwards, for the sake of that other beauty . . . passing from fair forms to fair actions, and from fair actions to fair ideas, until from fair ideas he arrives at the idea of absolute beauty, and at last knows what the essence of beauty is."

This, then, was the Greek conception of grace. It was beauty, showing itself in loveliness of form, reaching its highest physical ideal in the human form, and moulded there, in its truest examples, by an inner nobleness of soul. And this beauty was divine ; in its essence it was life's highest expression ; its true home was the nature and beauty of God. Has religion bettered it ? Grace is the beauty of God ;

the beauty of His character. And its action upon us is the outgoing of that beauty. Grace in ourselves, religious grace, is just the reflection of that beauty in our own heart and life. And if we take our doctrine of grace from the New Testament, instead of from the systems into which its words have been tortured, we shall find nothing there that is contrary to this, its first high meaning. It is there the nature of God, flowing out upon us, freely giving itself, winning us by the exhibition of its beauty, and producing in us, so far as we receive it, a growing approximation to its own perfectness.

How is it that we have got this fatal schism between the idea of grace of form, of motion, of the amenities of life; the grace we find in a flower, in a rhythmic movement, in the courtesy of *gentilesse;* and the grace we read of in theologic manuals? Passing from one to the other we seem to have gone to a new, a foreign region; a region where every meaning of the one is reversed in the other. Should there be this schism? The more we look at the nature of things, as we find them in the actuality of life, the more we are convinced of the unnaturalness, of the artificiality, that has caused this separation. God does not work in different ways in different spheres. His nature, one and the same in itself, is one and the same in all the regions where His action is revealed. The grace of beauty we find in a flower, the grace of free lavish giving we discover in the sunshine, the grace of cleansing and refreshing in the running stream; the grace we find here has no exclusiveness about it. It is, if we may so say, democratic all through; free to every one who will see, who will use, who will enjoy. The flower

gives its beauty, the sweetness of its perfume, to the beggar child as to the throned prince. It gives it perpetually as long as it is a flower. It can do no other, because it is a flower. And all the operations of nature are on the same footing. Gravitation treats us all in one way, with no respect of persons. We trust it, in building a house, in climbing a hill, in our downsitting and in our uprising. If we insult it by our neglect of its laws, we shall pay the penalty. But its main operation is all for our security, for the stability of the system in which we live and move.

This grace, this free giving in nature—God's action in the world—is, however, we always find, while free in itself, boundless in its generosity, in a certain way conditioned. It comes as an appeal to ourselves, an appeal we may reject. Its appeal is in the sense of Bismarck's motto, *Do ut des*, "I give that you may give." The value of the gift is conditioned by the value in ourselves. For it to be of use to us depends on our power and willingness of response. It meets us half-way; we have to come the other half. Your flower has no beauty for a stone. Its beauty is only for those who can perceive beauty. The treasures of the earth, of its forests, its harvests, its mines, come to us in a half-formed condition; the other half, which makes them available, which transforms them into actual wealth, must be our own contribution. The heavens do not rain baker's loaves upon us. The mines do not present us with minted sovereigns. Nature's grace is a call to work. She first enriches our manhood and then calls upon it to assert itself.

And here, in her appeal, and in the way man has responded to it, comes in nature's doctrine of election,

that doctrine which theology has so profoundly misjudged. Her elect are the men of higher endowment, of a keener faculty of response, who have seen further and deeper than their fellows into her meaning, who first have learned her lesson. Thus it is the poet, the artist, who has discovered the soul of the flower; the scientist who has caught the secret of her movement, of her chemistry, her biology; the philosopher who has penetrated to the unity that underlies her diversity; the saint who has entered into the grandeur of her moral and spiritual law. Here, in the rise of her great souls, is her selection, if you will, her fore-ordination. But observe there is no exclusiveness, no preterition, no reprobation. These elect are nowhere elected for themselves. They are chosen as handers on of the good gifts to their fellows. No man invents, discovers a thing for his profit alone. He cannot do it if he would. The laws of his own nature and of the world outside him compel him to be a purveyor. His discovery becomes at once the property of mankind. A Newton, a Kepler, explore the heavens, and the new light they draw thence enlightens the world. Watt and Stephenson find the uses of steam as a force generator, and all the continents are covered with railways. Marconi wins the secret of wireless telegraphy, and ships at sea are rescued by it from the devouring fire and the engulfing wave. And the saint, finding in his soul a new experience of God, a glorious access of spiritual power, can keep no movement of it to himself. He becomes to his fellows a centre of warmth and light; the hungry multitude rushes to feed upon the divine bread he dispenses.

Do we suppose that this rule, which obtains everywhere in time, takes on another aspect in eternity? God is the nature of things, and this *is* the nature of things. And the grace that nature reveals is a grace that is free to all, that embraces all in its bounty, that gives more largely to some that they may pass on the glorious boon, and in so doing add immeasurably to the stock of the common human fellowship, to its gratitude, its personal devotion, its sense of the blessedness of giving and receiving. This is nature's theology, something different from that of the schools. Diderot said that superstition has been a greater enemy to God than atheism. And when we think of the way in which ecclesiasticism has misrepresented His way of things—has made His grace an affair of cliques and castes, has shut it up into an iron mechanism, has interpreted it as an arbitrary choice of some and the wholesale damnation of others, we are inclined to admit the encyclopædist's contention. We may learn more of God from a flower than from whole libraries of this kind of theology.

But, it may be asked, is there not another, a darker side to all this? What of the evil in the world, what of man's selfishness and sin? God forbid we should minimise that, or paint it in any colours than its own. We know the soundings that have been made into the deeps of that mystery; what theology has to say, what evolution has to say. Let each take his own view of that matter. We are not here discussing it. We are not discussing causes, but something else. What we want now to point out is that, just as in those other aspects of life we have been dealing with, so in this of evil and

of sin, we have a revelation in things, in nature, which we may take as the surest revelation of the Personality behind them. Is there not a grace of nature here, which may be taken as the grace of God? Nature in the presence of man's evil knows no revenges, harbours no ill-will. How does she deal with his blindness, his stupidity? For ages her great truths have lain before him, waiting for recognition; truths shown in the rocks, in the elements, in plant and animal life, in man's own history. For ages he passes them by; having eyes and seeing not, and ears and hearing not. Does she complain; dismiss the scholar as a dunce? She goes on in her own way, just patiently day by day setting the lesson again before his eyes, until at last he sees. One can then almost hear her whisper: "Ah! have you understood me at last?" And for man's folly and wickedness she has no other way. Her sun rises on the just and the unjust; her rains descend not only on the good but on the unthankful and the evil. And in proportion as men catch this secret and become themselves good, they act in precisely the same way towards ungoodness. Towards selfishness, ingratitude, the deepest and darkest sins, they have no other way of action than that of being good and doing good. To be or do anything else than that would be to deny their own nature. And they know there is no way of winning to goodness but by goodness. It is a law in all spaces in the universe, in all ages of its eternity. And till God changes His nature there is and can be no other way for Him in His dealing with sinners.

When we have restored this word to its true and pristine meaning; when we have carried that

meaning into our personal experience; in a word, when we have tasted and felt the beauty of God, we shall find here a faith that will carry us the whole length of the journey. We shall put this interpretation upon the whole range of circumstance, of the things that happen to us. It will be our explanation of suffering; of the sorrows that at times tear our hearts. It is the business of goodness to suffer; we could not reach the eternal beauty—no, nor express it—without suffering. In that dark recess are hid treasures of the spirit not otherwise to be come at. Christ would not have been Christ without it; it was His Cross that showed us God's heart. And it is precisely when we feel most desolate and forsaken that He is nearest to us. The pang we feel has hidden in it His most intimate message.

The survey we have made, if it is not a mistaken one, shows us how all the shades of meaning to which this word, in its passage through time, has linked itself, point to one and the same thing. Grace, at its fountain-head, is the beauty of God, the beauty of His character. Grace in us, so far as it shows there, is the reflection of that beauty, its implantation and growth in us. And the beauty spreads into all the spheres of life. There are no really fine manners that do not come from a beautiful soul. The peasant who has that is a truer gentleman than the man who, without it, has all the polish of the schools. This inner beauty flows into the face, chisels its features into refinement, gives melody to the voice. Have you noticed how a deed of heroism has the same effect on you as the glory of a sunset, or a strain of noble music? What is

the glow of feeling there, common to them all, but a revelation of their unity of origin? It will be the sense of this unity that, in the coming years, will bring art, music, science, industry, and the whole conduct of life into one great synthesis. It will be this unity that will build for us beautiful cities, that will create beautiful bodies for beautiful souls; that will subdue coarseness to refinement; that will raise the common action of humanity from its present discords and dissonances into its predestined harmony. With all this men will reach to new perceptions of beauty; a finer vision will disclose finer forms of it. In the end, man will be satisfied with nothing less than its highest form. From all the infinite charms of earth, the soul, athirst for perfection, will still lift its eyes to the heavens; will whisper its aspiration: "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee!" For it perceives that the one beauty that alone can satisfy it is the beauty of holiness—the grace, the beauty of God.

XXIII

OUR POSSESSIONS

We are all possessors. The sense of ownership might easily be added to the original five. To each one of us, as we have passed through life, there has floated up, out of the sum of things, a certain number of objects, more or less tangible, that have entered into our intimate selves, that are nearer to us than to anybody else, and which we call our own. Ever since there were two men in the world there has been the difference—an acute one—between *meum* and *tuum*. The primitive man who had found for himself a comfortable cave, felt it when the next man came along and looked in. But the huge question has since arisen, and has been agitating the world ever since, as to what sort of things we should possess, and how we should possess them. There has been in this field every conceivable kind of experiment. Our own age has produced the funniest experiments of all. It has produced the multi-millionaire, who, at the age of sixty or seventy, when his days are visibly numbered, goes on feverishly piling up his millions. At the end of his journey he is carrying all this luggage! His possessions mean that he, with perhaps five years to live, has food resources enough to secure him four meals a day for thousands of years; that he can buy thousands of suits of clothes he can never wear,

thousands of chairs he can never sit on, and thousands of beds he can never lie on. He can cover the country with houses and palaces, and yet can only occupy some six feet of space in a corner of one of them. And yet with all these impossibles around him; with the nature of things openly laughing at him, he strives after ever more impossibles; his one object apparently being to make this joke against him the more palpable, the more risible. It does seem rather absurd!

In the same world, breathing the same air, and assuredly with a not less equipment of brains, have been people whose ideas of possession were so vastly different. They had as vivid a sense of ownership as these others and, moreover, had quite as many things to own; only they were not the same things, nor held in the same way. How large the question is, is shown by this largeness of difference. Diogenes in his tub, accosted by Alexander, the biggest owner of the millionaire sort then extant, and asked by him how he could oblige him, replies, "By getting out of my sunshine!" Which of the two, we ask, was the saner, the philosopher or the conqueror; which of them was the true possessor? Or were they both a little mad? Certainly the world's biggest men, so far, have inclined to the Diogenes side of the argument. One wonders what was possible to St. Paul, had he gone into politics, or business, or high finance? He had about as fine a brain and as magnificent a will as has ever appeared in this world. But the idea of accumulation for its own sake seems never to have entered his head. John Wesley was one of the most commanding figures of the eighteenth century. Macaulay said of

him that he had the administrative qualities of a Richelieu. What he left behind him in personal property was a Bible, some oddments of furniture, and a few silver spoons. In our day practical chemistry, in the hands of first-class minds, is one of the surest ways to enormous wealth. Faraday, with his £300 a year at the Royal Institution, when invited to enter on this lucrative road, replied that he could not afford to spend time in money-making. And there is another story in history of a wealthy young man meeting another young man who had not a roof of his own to put his head under. But the rich man bowed before the poor one, sought direction of him, knowing all the time what poverty his own riches were, as compared with the possessions of this other !

Here, then, amongst eminently capable men, on both sides men of the highest ability, amongst them the very chiefs of our race, are grave and singular differences. On the one side the modern men who have made and are making millions. On the other side, numbering also some moderns among them, are these others, equally eager about possessions and counting themselves rich in them, who have such other, such quite contrary notions ! And note that the difference here is not, as a hasty judgment might suppose, one between visible and invisible holdings. The one side, not less than the other, believes in the visible. The difference lies rather in their relation to it, and in what lies behind it, and in their way of holding on to both. We have to-day both ideals before us ; we have in addition the long experience of the race to go upon ; all the growing knowledge of the world and life which is coming to

us. In the light of these things we are called on to take our own line, to make our own choice.

All men, including those of the most opposite schools, are agreed as to the primary value, the absolute necessity, in fact, of material possessions. We all, saints and ascetics as well as millionaires, must live before we can live well. We must eat and drink, be clothed and housed, have our furniture, our tools and working instruments. People in the north, in the colder latitudes, need more of these than the southerners, those for whom the sun does so much. The northern races by this sheer necessity have been driven into a larger acquisitiveness than those easier circumstanced folk of the south and east. They went for more because they needed more. And their faculties in this direction grew from a constant exercise. Transport the Pacific islander, living where the sun is the one heating apparatus, where a cocoanut feeds him and a loin cloth clothes him, to the region of long winters and keen frosts, and he will soon change his habits, and with them some parts of his moral outlook. In these later days the question of material possessions has, from the sheer facts of the case, assumed an aspect undreamt of in Palestine and the year 1. The world has become peopled with hundreds more of hungry millions. We are awakening to the fact that we have been using up our common possessions in an altogether too lavish and ruinous way. We are cutting down our forests, exhausting our soils, burning up our coal. We can empty a coal bed in a few years; has it occurred to us to ask how long it would take to grow a new one? We have in other ways come closer to famine than most of

us are aware of. Through the manufacture from the atmosphere of nitrates and nitrites by newly discovered processes we have just staved off a very menacing scarcity by the near exhaustion of the nitre beds of Chili. We are slowly waking up to the necessity, if our millions are to go with full stomachs, of a new treatment of the soil. Prince Kropotkin, in his "Fields, Factories and Workshops," has shown us how we may stave off a food famine by the new farming, a farming which experiment has shown possible, and which, instead of yielding six tons of grass on the acre, will yield from fifty to a hundred tons of various vegetables on the same space. In the future we shall live largely on the earth's hitherto untapped resources, on those secrets of fertility, of new forces which science has yet to wring from nature's hidden reserves. In all this there is no clash of the moralities, of the life ideals. The earth is the human estate—the only thing, so far as at present appears, it has to live on.

These are ownership questions of the whole race, in which we all have our share. But granting their demand, and starting from them as common ground, we have now to consider some of the problems, so manifold, so intricate, which affect our position and conduct as individuals. To begin with, what do we, millionaires or wage-earners, really possess? How much can any of us really call our own! The question speedily resolves itself into this other: "How much do we possess of what we possess?" Narrowly observed, the quantity seems to diminish the more we look at it. If there is one thing we seem to own, and be master of, it is our own bodies.

And yet our own bodies go on as if we—that is to say, our own consciousness, our own will—were not there, or at least, were of very small account. The billions of cells which compose them carry on their own life, are born, grow, die, wage, some of them, their internecine wars, with smallest thought of you and me. Have you anything to do with the growth of your own hair? Does your heart or lung or cerebellum ever consult you as to how it shall do its work? Does sleep come to us of our will or of its own? Did you wake this morning because you willed to, or because something else willed to? Does your will have any clearly discerned hand in the process by which one thought succeeds another, or by which thought emerges from the hinterland of the sub-conscious? Do you determine how long you are going to live, or when your heart will close up and cease its beating? The body seems our nearest possession, and how little do we seem to possess it!

We come from that to our outside holdings. We stood once with a landed proprietor on an elevated position on his estate. Around us was a great stretch of country, fields, moorlands with swelling hills bounding the horizon. "It is something," said our friend, with a laugh, "to look round on all this, as far as your eye can see, and to feel that it is all one's own!" We could not repress the reply: "When nature sketched out this outline, these valleys and hills, millions of years ago, do you think she had you particularly in mind; or will you be particularly in her account in the other millions of years that this is going to last?" This kind of ownership, the most coveted so far amongst men,

what is it? An affair of inheritance or purchase, which, under present conditions, gives a man the power to say "Mine," to put up notice boards, to exclude his fellows, to make changes and alterations, to create solitudes if he so wills, to coerce to a more or less degree the people who rent or till the soil under him. He can lord it for a while in this fashion. Then he passes; and the hills and the fields continue, quite unconscious of his coming and his going. And all the time of his possession, his ownership, reduced to the actual fact, what is it—his sensations about these things; his thoughts about them? And often enough these have been of a very poor, meagre, unwholesome sort, of no good to himself or anybody else. They have been often enough a mere lust of power, a love of mean tyrannies, hurtful to society; and which society, coming rapidly to a sense of its own earlier rights here, will soon sweep away.

It is, after all, a superficial ownership, and even under the present constitution of things there are such deeper ones going. "I possess the estate," says the man of the purse. "And I possess the landscape," says the poet. He, and the artist with him, own its beauty, draw its revenue of high raptures and noble inspirations, in a degree impossible to the mere purse. Compare the owning of a rare edition of Homer by a wealthy but ignorant book collector, with that of the scholar who knows it by heart. We enter into this, the truest ownership, by the love and labour of the mind. We take away from earth's treasures according to what we bring to them. A fresh, beautiful soul possessing nothing in the capitalist sense, will take out of the earth, on

any summer morning, things which the financial magnate never stumbles on. He will see worms where the other will pick up diamonds. Here is old Traherne, the penniless parson of the seventeenth century, with not an acre of his own, and yet enjoying the earth in this fashion :—

> Long time before
> I in my mother's womb was born,
> A God, preparing, did this glorious store
> The world for me adorne.
> Into this Eden, so divine and fair,
> So wide and bright, I come, His son and heir.

Renan felt like that, when, associating himself with Francis of Assisi, with no invested capital in the earth, he realised, with the saint, that he " enjoyed the usufruct of the whole, having nothing and yet possessing all things." And there are others of us, thank God, to-day, who are possessors of this wealth, and would not part with it for any other.

All possession, when you dig down to its final form, is an innermost thing, an affair of our thought and feeling. It is strange that, amid all the hurry of getting, men have so little considered that fact. If they had, they would have worked harder than they have for the best sort. It is here where the Pauls, the Wesleys, the Faradays, following that Other we spoke of, have proved their sanity. Take the different sorts of possession, looked at from this inner side. On the one hand, here is the million maker, who has won his havings by relentless methods, trampling his way over the bodies of weaker men, broken by his keener intellect, his ruthless will. What has he gained ? Numberless things to look at of which he soon tires ; all those

possibilities we mentioned, of eating and drinking, and clothing and housing, of which he can avail himself so little—unless he over-eats and over-drinks, for which nature will speedily send in her bill of costs. "But he has power!" And what is that as an inward possession? What are these victories yielding him for his private thoughts? Is his knowledge of what those men he has defeated and crushed feel towards him: their envy, their hatred, their thought of revenge, their mere despair, a wholesome, satisfying food for the mind? Is the knowledge of other men's envy a good thing to live on? Is the flattery which waits on success, the insincerity of which an acute intellect like this cannot help penetrating, a wholesome food? Is this sort of inner revenue worth what has been paid for it? On a mere calculation of profit and loss, does the account come out on the right side? The fact that nature has taken care that it comes out on the wrong side, remains, if every other proof were lacking, the surest evidence that we are in quite another sort of universe, under quite another order of government from that which the materialist tries to believe in. And the evidence for that becomes irresistible when we look into those possessions which the other, the Christ order of life, brings with it. Let a man in that spirit give himself to duty, devote his powers to the service of others, not for dominion over them, but as a helper of their joy; going among them, like his Lord, "as one that serveth." He, too, as life goes on, is accumulating his possessions. He finds them in the glad faces that he meets; in the knowledge that his influence is everywhere an uplifting, sorrow-lightening influence. And with this there

has been going on in him a process of refining, of the enriching of his faculties, a culture which fills him with a sense of all that is beautiful, of all that is holy, a sense which makes him sure of the spiritual and sure of God.

At present this view of things seems under a cloud. The capitalist is thought more of than the spiritual leader. The voices of the great ones of the past who have stood for the inner values are drowned under the clink of dollars. M. Faguet, the eminent French critic, is of opinion that under the existing reign of capitalism the world, so rich in its material treasures, in its scientific triumphs, is losing far more than it has gained—is on the way to lose all the most precious treasures of the spirit; its religion, its truest art, its deepest thought. We cannot think so. This frenzied rush for the vulgarities of life will not last. The sanity of the human intellect must, in the end, reassert itself. Man cannot permanently feed on ashes, or on the bread that perisheth. The prodigal will tire of his swine trough. His finer part will awake; will know that this is not his rest; and from that far country, and from those ignoble surroundings, will strike again the track that leads homeward.

XXIV

THE SECRET OF REST

Is there room anywhere in our crowded, fevered life, for such a thing as rest? It is worth talking about, even if we can get no further. There are times when it seems the most beautiful thing in the world, if only we could reach it. "Quiet resting-places," "peace," "rest," "quiet," "holy stillness," what lovely words are these; how, at times, they fall upon the soul as melodies from heaven! How often have we echoed the Psalmist's cry, "Oh, that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest." Only we ask, almost despairingly, "Would the wings of a dove, how far soever they might fly, land us where rest is?" Lecky tells of a German graveyard where he found a tomb with this inscription: "I will arise, O Christ, when Thou callest me; but, oh, let me rest awhile, for I am very weary!" Have we not sometimes felt like that? We meditate at times, like Hervey, among the tombs; and feel the peace of them. What once fevered brows, hearts torn with cares and troubles, lie there! But the fight is over; the troubles somehow adjusted themselves. The faces of these dead lost all their wrinkles when the last moment came. It was as if nature said, in that final touch of hers: "Come, you are not hurt, after all!"

But we are alive. Is there any rest for *us?* It is certainly not always to be found where it is

commonly sought. We hear to-day of "rest cures," where they put you to bed, and forbid you letters and the newspaper, and feed you up like the Strassburg geese for the *pâté de foie gras*. We will not disparage the *régime*, but are they all at peace, think you, who are undergoing it? The country village, remote from trains, far from the madding crowd, where nothing happens, is often pictured for us as a blessed antithesis from the rush of cities. And you shall find there, often enough, the most restless, discontented souls the land contains. And there are sorts of rest we are none of us eager for. Do we want the peace of that Oxford professor, who

> Sought refuge from the brute
> In the blessed Absolute!

It does not seem very satisfying. We know, too, of what has been called "the peace of defeat," the apathy of the man who has tried and failed; who says, "I have done my best, and I can do no more." We have even looked wonderingly at the alligators at the Zoo, who lie there, hour after hour, without sign or sound or motion. It seems, at best, existence on rather a low scale. Then there is that sluggishness of which old Pycroft speaks; of people "who are less likely to go wrong, because there is no go in them"; and we do not feel drawn to it. The rest, too, of thinkers who have reached "the centre of indifference"; who, as Leslie Stephen says, "have reached a point when, as at the pole, the compass points indifferently to every quarter." That also has little attraction for us. Nor that even of so many modern Catholics who have given up thinking for themselves as too dangerous, and instead acquiesce in an outside and a mediæval thinking.

Where, then, is rest to be found, the rest we are seeking after? We are apt to draw our images here from physical conditions. But they are enormously delusive. You recline in your easy chair, with your feet on the fender; or are stretched comfortably in your bed at night, and apparently have reached the thing as near as may be. And yet at that moment you are careering round with the earth in its prodigious spin on its axis; are racing with it on its many millioned journey round its orbit; and again are joining in that tremendous voyage through space in which it is accompanying the sun in its move towards some unknown bourne of the heavens. It is enough to keep one awake to think of it. We think of the majestic rest of a mountain; of Mont Blanc slumbering there through the centuries while the generations of men come and go at its feet. But Mont Blanc is never at rest. On its surface the freezing ice is perpetually cracking its rocks; working ruin at its summit. And did you ever think of the sort of rest it has down at the base? Every moment those broad foundations carry and bear the thrust of the hundreds of millions of tons that are reared upon them. It is the rest of a giant who bears, without respite, a world on his shoulders. And then the atoms of which it is composed. The latest investigations show us the atom, in the words of a modern scientist, as a kind of "planetary system, consisting of a nucleus and an immense host of particles or electrons revolving round it at vast speed." The visible universe is clearly the wrong place to go for the rest of quiescence. As Herbert Spencer, in one of his latest works, puts it: "The conception to which the exploration of nature

everywhere tends is much less that of a universe of dead matter than that of a universe everywhere alive." "*Panta rei*" (everything in flux) said old Heraclitus. "Keep moving," seems the cosmic order.

If our rest is not there, where then? It is plainly, if anywhere, to be found within, in a condition of the soul. And we doubt if the thing, as realised, can be put into words. It requires an instrument more delicate, less illusive, than language. The most we can do is to circle round it, in illustrations and approximations. And the best of us can hardly speak of it as a permanent possession. We get it, and lose it, and light on it again. But there is a secret of it, or rather secrets, which we ought to know of. That man is nearest it who finds himself most at home in the universe, in harmony with life and with all its laws. One likes to have a home of one's own, but the domestic hearth is by no means always—in these days less than ever—a rest producer. On the other hand, there have been men whose condition could be described almost, in Homer's words, as "*aphretor, athemistos, anestios*" (without kin, without the law, without a hearth); men prescribed, with no certain dwelling place, far from family and from friends, hunted and persecuted, adrift on the world's highway, pushed on to a bourne they could not see, who, nevertheless, in their wanderings have found themselves intensely at home; who in the midst of incessant conflicts have found their centre of peace. It is, of course, a secret of faith, a spiritual achievement. But do not let us suppose that it has been confined to any one faith. Confucius, surely, was near it when he said: "With coarse rice to eat, with

water to drink, and my bended arm for a pillow, I still have joy in the midst of these things." And that other pagan, Antoninus Pius, who, on the last night of his life, when the tribune came for the watch-word of the night, said: "*Æquanimitas.*" Socrates, too, calmly discoursing of the soul before drinking the fatal hemlock, is of the order; the order of those children of the spirit, who, outside our own communions, belonged to the same kingdom; who penetrated the same mystery, taught of the same Eternal Word.

It is beautiful to notice how, apart from the inward and spiritual teaching, nature, in her order, her arrangements, her adaptations, strives to open to us this secret. It is there in her divine ordinance of work. To a wholesomely constituted mind, there is never a more complete sense of rest than when one is in the fulness of activity. The picture which George Eliot draws of Adam Bede, with his feet in dry shavings, his window open to the green fields, singing his Methodist hymn as he drives his plane, is the picture of a soul at rest—at rest in toil. The worker here is like a great fly-wheel, which, with all its whirl of movement at the circumference, has a centre of complete repose. And nature's adaptations, her laws of use and wont, work to the same result. The young medical student who faints over the first operation he witnesses, finds afterwards the artist's joy in the skilled use of knife and scalpel. In the moment of great catastrophes, too, nature comes in with her anodynes. Whymper has recounted how, after his slip on the Matterhorn, when he expected each moment to be his last, he found himself calmly guessing as to how many more bumps would finish

him. A correspondent of ours, whose home in South America had been wrecked by an earthquake, and himself and his family flung out for the night on the mountain side, averred that he had never in his life had more peaceful, restful thoughts, a more vivid sense of God's protecting nearness than in the watches of that night. Men in prison, with the scaffold waiting for them in the morning, have slept soundly. Between them and the fact before them their soul had found its accord; often a completer accord than they had ever known before. If we could interrogate the minds of men faced by life's grimmest adventures, we should find a vast testimony to the friendliness they found there.

The inward peace of the instructed soul is, one may say, never one of inertia, of the absence of burdens, of difficulties. It is rather that of the mountain which placidly bears its load; of the keystone of the arch, which rests in its place under the thrust of opposing forces. Equilibrium, indeed, which is, in the material world, a balance of forces, follows, it would seem, a similar law in the mental and moral region. Thus, our health is a balance between the income and the outflow of energy. They are opposites, and were either to cease their interplay, we should speedily be on the wrong side. And if we are taking life sanely, we shall be learning to educate the will to maintain a similar balance. When external circumstances are pressing us hardly, we bring up, as against them, our reserves of the internal. Well for us if they are strong and in good order! You have had heavy losses on the market; on that side you are suddenly poorer. How fine, how strengthening it is, in such an hour, to remember all you have

left, and especially what is left of life's true wealth! Are you firmly planted in that region? It is the spiritualisation of your attitude to nature and the world. Have you entered fully, for instance, into her laws of riches and poverty? They are quite independent of the market. There is a minor one worth noticing, a time law. Her year by its mere procession fills us and empties us. It is her calendar of vicissitudes. In November and December we are poor. Like the trees we have been stripped and bared. We are nipped in light and sunshine, in warmth and colour. At the shortest day we have reached our nadir. But then, with our fortunes at the lowest, our pockets begin to fill. We have touched bottom and find ourselves on the upgrade. January is hopeful; February is glorious with promise. Spring comes and trade is flourishing all round. New life, new hopes, new energies everywhere without us and within us. In the summer we are millionaires. Autumn overflows, but with signs that the boom is slackening. We must economise. We are once more facing the dark. But the dark has ceased to frighten us, for we know its range and term, and the glories that are to follow. This is a profit and loss experience which comes to all of us, and is more real than anything on the Stock Exchange. It is nature's own comment on our rush for mere money gains; a comment which has some sarcasm in it! 'Tis an elementary lesson, but the man who has understood even this has won a great freedom. He can weigh his spring and his summer against all the adversities which may happen in them, and be sure of his balance.

We win our rest, we say, by the balancing of

opposites. In the illustration just given, we have the opposition between artificial wealth and the real wealth—nature's wealth. But the law holds everywhere. So much of our unrest comes from our social collisions. People quarrel, and are miserable in their quarrels. Join two fractious humours and you have a conflagration. But you may live happy with the hottest tempered companion if you have become yourself versed in that sweetest of oppositions—the spirit of peace. We remember a conversation with a working man who had an excellent wife, who had, however, some fire in her composition. They got on famously. Asked for his recipe, his reply was: "When missus is up, I just keep on saying nowt!" He was a happy man. The noblest of all oppositions to a frowning world—the all conquering one—is the spirit of faith. Bring it to bear on all the dread possibilities of the future, and it will keep you in good cheer. It is a good saying of Edgar Quinet, born of much trying experience, "The unknown very often saves us. It is probable that what one fears will not happen, and that we find blessings we never thought of." But that is only a fragment of that vaster faith which saintly souls have reached, souls that have penetrated life to its centre and found God there. Has any finer prescription for inner rest been given than this? It is from the *Imitatio*, "When a man cometh to that estate that he seeketh not his comfort from any creature, then first doth God begin to be altogether sweet to him. Then shall he be contented with whatsoever doth befall him in this world. Then shall he neither rejoice in great matters, nor be sorrowful in small, but entirely

and confidently committeth himself to God, who is unto him all in all."

Assuredly there is the secret and the centre of rest. At home with God, we are at home in His world, in His universe. No part in it, no realities of it, will be to us strange or terrifying. Under all circumstances we shall discern His laws, which are His holy will. And they are all our friends. This central rest, which He invites us to, is the ground and condition of all fine achievement. We are never at our best if we permit fear or ignoble depression to drain away our force. We have really none to spare in that direction. Goethe has a true saying here. Speaking of the story of Christ's walking on the water and of Peter's failure there, he says: "It expresses the noble doctrine that man, through faith and hearty courage, will come off victor in the most difficult enterprises; while he may be ruined by the least paroxysm of doubt." St. Paul had this secret. He wrought out his wonderful apostolate because he had "learned in whatsoever state he was therewith to be content." Why not? He was full of the Divine presence, and his universe was full of it too. The wilderness he found there, the prisons, the hungers and thirsts, the bloody death at the end, could not hide from him, or dim the glorious vision. When that light shines on us and in us, we shall meet whatever befalls as cheerily as he.

XXV

THE CURE OF SOULS

It is an ecclesiastical phrase, half Latin, meaning, of course, in modern English, "the care of souls." Caring may be said to involve curing; but it goes a great deal further. There has, perhaps, been too much soul "curing" and too little caring; too much drugging and too little feeding. We are reminded here of Mrs. Poyser's famous dictum concerning the two clergymen she had sat under. "Mr. Irvine was like a good meal o' victual, you were the better for him without thinking on it; and Mr. Ryde was like a dose of physic, he gripped you and worrited you, and, after all, he left you much the same." Bishop Creighton seems to have had the same idea in that terrible witticism which he perpetrated at the expense of his ritualistic clergy. In an interview about incense, one of them said, "But, my lord, you must remember we have a cure of souls." To which he replied, "And you think that souls, like herrings, cannot be cured without smoke?"

Our readers, we fear, will accuse us of tumbling into a great theme in a rather haphazard and irreverent way. Assuredly it *is* a great theme, worthy of all our seriousness. That the care of

souls should, amongst practically all sections of the human race, have been made a special vocation, for which men, withdrawn from all other industries, specially equipped, prepared by long training, and supposed to be possessed of more than ordinary gift and character, should devote their whole life, maintained meanwhile by the labours and offerings of their fellows, is, when one comes to think of it, a wonderful and deeply suggestive thing. That there should be men gaining their living by looking after our bodies—seeing what ailing bodies they are—is not in itself remarkable. But that every nation and every age should have had its professional soul carers, fed and housed at the general expense, this in itself is surely noteworthy. Whether we think of the Pope in Rome, living in a palace of some four thousand rooms, and with the revenues of a world flowing daily into its exchequer ; or of those weavers in the " Auld Licht Idylls," who straitened their eating and added to their work-hours in order to weave a maintenance for the minister of their choice, the theme is sufficiently wonderful. That, in spite of all that has been said to the contrary, all the indictments against this view of things, all the ridicule of it, man continues so obstinately religious ; persists in the idea that he has a soul in him worth looking after, in need of being cured, cared for, and saved—have you not here a matter to ponder over ? Yes, spite of all, the spiritual world presses upon man. Let him sink himself deep as he may in material things, it reaches him there. Let him cry out at it, believe its forms to be grotesque, impossible. No matter. It may change its forms, but it is always there ; mysterious, fascinating, maddening some-

times in the bewilderment of its questions, but there as his closest affinity, the formative force of his life.

The cure, or care of souls, considered as a separate vocation, seems to have been as old as humanity itself. In earliest times, amid savage races, it was combined generally with the care of bodies. The medicine-man, who stood as mediator between the tribe and the unseen powers, had to protect it against bodily as well as spiritual evils. His " magic " was held to be good against liver complaints as well as against the deeper troubles of the mind. He held the place of those quack doctors of the eighteenth century, on whom Lady Mary Montagu has this biting comment : " The same money which, three hundred years ago, was given for the health of the soul is now given for the health of the body, and by the same sort of people—women and half-witted men." There is much of that going on to-day as well as in the eighteenth century. Brahminism, Buddhism, Mohammedanism, have all their separated caste, their clergy. Christianity, from its beginning, has had its ordained ministry. The greatest of the apostles worked for his living ; but his noble pride in that matter did not prevent him from maintaining in principle that the Gospel minister should live of the Gospel. Deeply interesting is it to watch the evolution there. The *Didache*, that precious document discovered in our own day, gives us a picture of the ministry which, at the beginning of the second century, had succeeded to the apostolic order. We see there the evangelists or missioners, inspired messengers of the faith, going from place to place, forbidden to remain for other than the briefest space at any one abode, under strictest rules as to receiving

money or gifts—a body of travelling preachers, teaching, baptizing, administering the sacrament, a veritable order of spirit and fire. But the churches grew in number, and these wandering prophets died off, with no successors. The work of preaching and administering fell, consequently, on the local leaders. The duties fell upon the leading elder, the "episcopus" or "overseer." Originally a layman, the ever increasing duties compel his definite separation to the work. So get we our Christian ministry, more and more carefully ranked in position and function.

It was a fateful development, full of good and full of evil. The clerical order has produced some of the noblest spirits that have ever blessed the world. But the devil has taken a monstrous toll of it. So vast are its temptations, and so queer a thing is human nature. Wherever men climb the heights we have a percentage of catastrophes. What the temptations have been, and how men have succumbed to them, is shown to us as early as Jerome's time, where he describes the Roman clergy as "flattering rich matrons, spending the day in calls at grand houses, admiring a cushion or a handkerchief by way of obtaining it as a present, walking abroad with hair fashionably arranged and rings glittering on their fingers; also of monks worming their way into favour with the rich, and pretending to fast, while they repaid themselves with nightly revelry." Right through the Middle Ages the game goes on, with unspeakable stories of popes and prelates. In the tenth century we read of priests offering mock masses in which they sang obscene songs, and possessing a blank infidelity, till at the Renaissance

the pitch is reached which Villari describes, " when it seemed as though the Papacy desired to extirpate all religious feeling from the mind of man, and to overthrow for ever every basis of morality."

The Reformation wrought a sweeping change in this order of things, a change, let us remember, not less potent in Romanism than in Protestantism itself. Yet in Protestantism, our own English brand of it, what queer things stand in the clerical record! We read of a Bishop of Durham, in Charles the Second's time, obtaining his see by a present of £5,000 to Nell Gwynne. Closer to our own day we read, in the Life of Bentham, of Lord Bristol, Bishop of Derry, whom Bentham met at Bowood, the seat of Lord Lansdowne. He says of the Bishop: " He did not believe in revealed religion; was very tolerant of the judgment of others, &c. The revenue of the bishopric was £7,200, with the patronage of forty-three advowsons, none less than £250 a year. They paid their curates £50, and were non-resident." A singular picture this of a bishop who believed nothing, and who administered a diocese of well-paid clergy who did nothing!

Certainly the cure of souls in this sense of it has produced some queer curators. The clerical spirit has often been dangerous to liberty. We remember Gambetta's " *le clericalisme: voilà l'ennemi.*" And yet on this soil what noble spirits have grown! Against the bad, the ignorant, the fanatical, what flaming souls of light and holiness; what interpreters of God and man; what martyr spirits, what forwarders of all goodness; what incarnations of all that is beautiful in living! Against Jerome's degenerates we put Ignatius and Polycarp; we think

of an Origen, a Cyprian, a Basil, a Chrysostom. Mediævalism, side by side with its evil livers, offers us an Alcuin, a Bernard; gives us those Irish priests who evangelised Germany; gives us St. Francis, of whom Renan said that his life made the historic Jesus possible to him. Over against the Renaissance priestly infidels stand a Luther, a Melanchthon, a John Knox. What a treasury of holy service has reformed Romanism offered in a Fénelon, a Vincent de Paul, in a Vianney, that marvellous priest of the French Second Empire. Against an Anglican Crewe and Bristol stand an Anglican Ken, an Andrewes, a Jeremy Taylor. What has been the worth to England of a Richard Baxter, whose "Reformed Pastor," a book that ministers should read every year, is the transcript of his own pastoral life; of a Wesley, with the world as his parish! What does America owe to Edwards, to Beecher! And in our modern civilisation is there, with all its defects, any solider force for goodness than the ministry of to-day? The cure of souls, taken as a vocation, may witness enormous changes in the future. Tyrrell, after his long experience of the priesthood, augurs "the final disappearance of the priest class, and the adoption of a system of unpaid ministration." Possibly. What we are sure of is that, amid all changes, all progress of the future, there will never be wanting elect souls, men with a genius for holiness as other men have a genius for science or music, lives dedicated to the spiritual, to whom the world will look for its best examples, its highest inspiration.

But surely "the cure of souls" has a wider significance than any that can be applied to a select

separated class. Are we not all in the business? The fact is we none of us can do anything that does not tell upon it. Never was there a time in which there was such intimacy, such close interaction of spirit as to-day. Never was the heart, the mind of man so exposed, so open to the winds and waves of varied influence. Our souls crowd each other. The railway, the telegraph, the newspaper, the incesssant movement of men, the rise and spread of new ideas—all this is upon each of us a constant pressure. Every man of us is a target for all the rest. We cannot stir or speak but we set things going that thrill through the world. We are all at work on each other, curing or killing. To-day the Government is a Church. Its schemes for housing, for education, for the extirpation of poverty, have a spiritual potency wider in effect than the decrees of popes and councils. What a day will that be when government shall be consciously a religious act, and not a scramble for votes and office, when our legislators shall believe with Pym that "a man's religion should show itself in having the country well governed"; when our militarists shall believe, with Ruskin, that "we should bring up our peasants to a book exercise instead of a bayonet exercise; organise, drill, maintain with pay, armies of thinkers instead of armies of stabbers"; when Government shall make itself a veritable cure of souls, and, as essential to that, a cure of bodies, a cure of conditions!

Certainly, in these directions, Government, the common action of the community, the thinking and acting of its best minds, can do much, how much we are only just beginning to understand. But it cannot

do all, no, nor half. The real cure of souls rests finally with ourselves. And nature, so far as we can see, has put us here mainly for that business. Her seeming indifference to our outward fortunes, the sufferings, the deaths she inflicts ; her permission of every kind of disaster, of misfortune, surely point mainly to this. We are here to be knocked, battered, bruised, into something greater than we are. We are here to be made as radium is made. We begin, as radium does, as a mere rock formation, a rock that contains something precious. We are put through process after process. The rock may cry out under that cruel machinery, but it pounds and pounds away until something emerges greater than rock, something whose exquisite fineness and force of quality accomplish the miracles we see. Ah ! if those struggles and sorrows we have had lift us to some new quality of being ! For it is the soul's quality that is everything. *Operari sequitur esse,* doing follows being, is according to being. When we have reached that better stage we are constantly doing things, good things, by simply being what we are. A good nature carries in it a glorious contagion of goodness. It flows out upon others as a healing power.

One wonders whether this cure of the soul, as an individual matter, is flourishing to-day ? Whether, in our absorption in affairs, we are putting them to their chief purpose, the distillation from them of the higher spiritual products ? Is prayer going out of fashion ? There is not so much of it as there used to be. And what of self-examination, that steady, clear-eyed, unrelenting scrutiny of ourselves, as we lie in our beds when the day is over ; the passing of our life before the clear light of the ideal, to see how

our words, deeds and inmost thoughts look in that penetrating radiance? There is no getting on without that. It should be as regular, as daily a habit as that of washing and dressing. It is as essential to the higher harmony as is the practice of the artist on piano or violin. It is thus that we keep up the fight with ourselves, that we detect and take note of those new, silent growths within that, unwatched, may become a hideous, enslaving power. It is only thus that we can keep in tune with the infinite. This does not mean a timid morbidity, as of *malades imaginaires* with their finger perpetually on the pulse. It is the gardener's care, who weeds his plot, who keeps his soil ready for the choicest cultures. This cure of the soul for ourselves will react happily on our cure of the soul for others. Our intercourse with our fellows will be everywhere a wholesome healing intercourse. When we have abolished the war with swords and bullets, another abolition awaits us, that of the war with poisoned swords, with those subtler, deadlier weapons of offence, the weapons of haughtiness, of indifference, of the mind's cruelty, with which untutored spirits maim and sting and crush the delicate natures around them. Are there not sorrows enough, and wounds enough, that we should fling arrows and bombs into the bleeding mass, that we should make any burdened brother sorrier for our presence beside him? We can gather no religious statistics on this head; but the growth of real religion has no surer mark than the development among us of that care of our own soul and of others which seeks our own good everywhere in the good of our fellows.

The cure of souls. Where, after all and above all,

does that lie ? It is finally God's business, His chief business with us. It is a hopeful, a mind-enlarging study, to note how He manages it. When we spoke of nature's seeming indifference to bodily suffering we were thinking really of God's way here. Plainly, He thinks more of the soul than of the body. He pursues all ways and dares all risks in producing, in developing that. Seneca, in his *De Providentia,* argues that suffering is the divine method of perfecting character. It is well to remember that when we do suffer. And be sure that God's cure of souls is no sectarian, no partisan affair. The coming of Christ meant no bar of exclusion to the non-Christian races. His unsearchable riches were no declaration of the outer world's bankruptcy. The early Fathers, Justin Martyr, Origen, Clement of Alexandria, delighted to think of Him as the " Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." One finds the most deeply Christian minds at one here. In that finest fruit of mediæval mysticism, the " Book of the Nine Rocks," we read : " When God finds a good Jew, a Mohammedan of pure life, He feels a thrill of love and infinite pity for him, no matter in what part of the earth he lives, and God will find some way of saving him unknown to us." And John Smyth, that noble early Baptist, says in his " Long Confession " : " As no man begetteth his child to the gallows, and no potter maketh a pot to break it ; so God does not predestinate any man to destruction." Truly, in ways unknown to us, does God care for souls ; in ways unknown to us, through the vast processes of life and history, does His work go on, do the signs of His spiritual kingdom visibly

appear. We, too, in our poor brief lives are His care. Soon to pass away and be forgotten of our fellows, we shall not be forgotten of Him. His infinity is too great for such a lapse. The All-knowing is the All-Loving. Here is a Love that will not let us go. The Cross is the assurance of it. In that Divine Passion and Death we learn what God's care means, to what length of sacrifice it reaches.

XXVI

OF CHURCH UNITY

The question of the religious reunion of Christendom, one of the greatest of all conceivable questions, has come upon us in a new and startling way. It has had no such opening for many generations. The possibilities of it on the one side, and on the other the supreme difficulties of it, have been blazed in upon the world's notice as by a circle of flame. On the one hand there is the new, powerful movement towards it. It is a movement largely of the new countries of Anglo-Saxondom. These peoples, remote from the traditions, free from the shackles of the old world, have turned upon the subject the initiative, the untramelled force of their own fresh minds. So we see in Canada, in Australia, in New Zealand, all over the newer world of the Empire, a development, proceeding with all the breathless rapidity of our electric age, towards the fusion of Christian bodies which hitherto have lived and grown apart. Simultaneously with the work in the British Colonies there has been going on a precisely similar activity in that other great branch of the family in the United States. We recently had in our midst an important deputation, representative of the leading Protestant Churches in the Republic, who were here to discuss with the authorities of English Christianity

the possibility and terms of a common religious fellowship. Out on the mission field, where the forces of the Cross are engaged in the fight with heathenism, and in the business of world evangelisation, the question has become urgent, crucial, and insists upon a solution. All that in the spheres of politics, of commerce, and of industry has been accomplished by co-operation, by the elimination of competition and rivalry, has thrust itself upon the notice of the Church, has become an irresistible argument for a similar procedure within its own borders.

That, on one side. But along with events of this order, all working towards amalgamation, we have, at the same time another set, equally prominent, equally urgent, which exhibit to us, in an almost lurid way, the tremendous obstacles that lie in the path. The storm in the Church of England over the Kikuyu affair was the counterblast to the spirit of the American Mission. It revealed, as in a flash, the bulk and the outline of that foe to Christian unity which has disfigured Christianity for centuries, which has rent it in twain, and which, until it is exorcised and finally slain, will reduce to nullity every effort towards corporate fellowship. What happened? Away in heathen Africa a body of missionaries, of different denominations, met together to consult as to the practicability of offering a common front and a common action, as Christian teachers, in presenting the Gospel to the pagan world around them. They arrived at a working concordat, and crowned their conference by a Communion service in which two Anglican bishops took part. For this a fellow African bishop accuses them of heresy, of treachery to Anglican principles, and his action is vehemently

supported by the Anglo-Catholic party in England. This party, which embraces in it some of the ablest and most influential of the Anglican clergy, including the majority of its higher dignitaries, holds, as vital to the Church, to its *esse*, its very being, the principle of the historic episcopate, derived by unbroken succession from the Apostles; a succession without which there can be no valid sacraments, no absolution, no communication of the Church's saving grace. This position (a position, by the way, which modern scholarship has absolutely disproved), on the one hand, places an impassable gulf between it and all non-episcopal communions, whom it absolutely unchurches; while, on the other, it allies it in principle and sympathy with Rome, whose orders it recognises, though the recognition is not reciprocated.

The quarrel arising out of the Kikuyu conference is for the moment confined to the contending parties within the Church of England. The idea that it is likely to lead to a speedy disruption there, is, we imagine, not well founded. It is a saying of Froude that "the Church of England was a latitudinarian experiment, a contrivance to enable men of opposing creeds to live together without shedding each other's blood." The contrivance has proved an excellent one, and has lasted through the storms of centuries. It founded the Church not simply on religion—of which there is plenty in both camps—but on some other very solid things; on the temporalities, on wealth, on political influence, on social prestige. And these have proved enduring holdfasts. They bore the strain of the expulsion of the Puritan clergy, of the Evangelical Revival, of the Hampden and

the Gorham controversies, of the Tractarian movement, of the secession of Newman. When we think of the tumult and the shouting over these later battles, of the prophecies of the inevitable break-up which accompanied them, and of the way in which the solid arguments of endowment and privilege prevailed, and brought back the waverers to the *status quo*, we are left with doubtings deep and wide whether these arguments will not to-day prove as efficacious as in those older quarrels. And yet how strange, how tragic the position is! In the words of Green, the historian, one of its own most distinguished clergy, "the Church of England stood from that moment alone among all the Churches of the Christian world. The Reformation had severed it irretrievably from the Papacy. By its rejection of all but Episcopal Orders the Act of Uniformity severed it as irretrievably from the general body of the Protestant Churches, whether Lutheran or Reformed. . . . From that time to this, the Episcopal Church has been unable to meet the varying spiritual needs of its adherents by any modifications of its government or its worship. It stands alone among all the great religious bodies of Western Christendom."

The next-door neighbour to the Anglo-Catholic party is the Roman Church. Their principles are practically identical. Our High Anglicans have only to continue on the road they have entered and Rome will be their terminus. Their idea of the reunion of Christendom is a reunion with the Roman and the Eastern or Greek Churches. Is there any possibility of the non-episcopal Churches, under present circumstances, joining in that move-

ment? With all the good will in the world, and with all our appreciation—and it is great—of the piety, the moral and spiritual excellence that are to be found in the Roman Church, we have nevertheless to face the facts. It is not the personal character of Catholics that is here in question. It is the principles and the claims of the Roman Church as an organised body. Her later developments and pronouncements, not to go beyond those, leave us in no doubt. Under those developments even the old liberties of thought and action which were once to be found in her pale have ceased to exist. Where are the ancient freedoms of the old English Catholicism? Where those of the Gallican Church in France—the Church of Bossuet, of Fénelon, of Pascal? They are gone, swallowed up in the Ultramontanism which has placed all power, all authority, in the Roman Curia. The Vatican Council proclaimed the infallibility of the Pope, declared him always right while all the world was wrong. It has turned its back upon all science, all progress, all modern civilisation. Here are the express words of the Syllabus: "Those are plunged in a gross error who pretend that the Pope can and ought to reconcile himself to, and to treat with, progress, liberalism, and modern civilisation" (*cum progresso, cum liberalismo, et cum recenti civilitate se reconciliare et componere*). As to liberty of conscience, Pope Gregory XVI. speaks of "that absurd and erroneous opinion, or rather that form of madness, which declares that liberty of conscience should be asserted and maintained for everyone." And still more recently, in our own day, we have the Jesuit, Lehmkühl, maintaining that "the Catholic Church

insists that it is an erroneous, perverse, and absurd assertion . . . that liberty of conscience is the individual right of every person."

The basic principle of Rome is a simple one. The Church is of supernatural origin, supernaturally endowed with knowledge, truth, and authority. Its power is supreme because it is from above, while all other powers, of civil governments, of human movements and institutions, are from beneath. And the policy which it pursues, relentlessly, unfalteringly, in every land where it has a footing, is to maintain, or where it has been lost, to regain that power; to rule absolutely, not simply in the direct matters of religion, but in those of politics, of research, of the social and of the domestic life. Open to any chapter of earlier or of later history and the threads of that policy are clearly discerned. M. Anatole France, in his "L'Eglise et la République," gives the story of its dealings with his country from the time of the Concordat to the final rupture with the State. It is an instructive study. And what is the Church which is thus to rule the world? It is not simply the priesthood, to the exclusion of all lay-knowledge and faculty, but it is the ultramontane, the Italian priesthood, which predominates and is all-powerful in the Curia. As Tyrrell said, speaking for the English Catholics: "We are not even allowed to know England and the English as well as Italians and Spaniards do." The infallible authority to which all the world is to bow; which is to put its arresting hand on all research, all science, all the age's best thinking, is, then, the authority of a group of Italians, ignorant, for the most part, of the universe they live in, of all the methods by which truth and discovery

are pushed forward, and, because ignorant, hostile to them. To accept this claim is to give up our dearest inner possessions, the truth we have won, and the liberty by which it has been won. Rome offers us unity on these terms and on no others. We are not takers at the price.

The Catholic party, in this contention, talks much of the sin of schism. In breaking away from its authority Protestants have torn the seamless robe of Christ. In dividing the one fellowship they have committed the deadliest of offences against Him whose prayer was "that they may all be one." It is a telling argument—for weak and uninstructed minds. The moment we begin to think we see its fallacy. There is a Christian unity, precious to all devout souls, and to be sought for with all our hearts, but it is not this unity. Has it ever occurred to the preachers of this doctrine that Christianity itself represents the most daring defiance of it? Christianity began with a decisive breach in external Church continuity. It was a schism, if ever there was one, a schism with the old established Jewish Church, a schism which that Church has never forgiven. To accept this dogma and to be logical in our acceptance, it behoves us all to renounce our separatism and to become good Jews.

A unity of this sort is, in fact, contrary to the nature of things, contrary to that divine law of progress, of the cosmic and the human movement by which the world has reached its present position. Nature, in the plant world and in the human world, proceeds by splits, by divisions, by swarmings off, by the creation of diversities. It is her method of securing that variety, that newness of environment

and of opportunity by which she nurtures her fresh creations and brings her new worlds to birth. That is her way, manifest in every department, and we may be tolerably safe in following it. And in her development of man she has, contrary to the Roman doctrine, insisted on the absolute freedom of the mind as the one condition of his discovery of truth. In the use of that freedom we are discovering where, in the region of the mind, the one unity lies. It is in the harmony which is increasingly revealing itself in every department of research, between one truth and another. Beneath all nature's endless varieties we see the working of one law, of one intelligence, of one primal force. Here, indeed, we find one of the great factors of that religious unity for which all good men are striving. It is the unity we are learning to see between the facts of the external universe and the facts of the spirit. That is where science and religion are meeting. It is a reunion better and deeper than anything our Church conferences can devise.

It is along this line that the only Church unity worth the name will eventually come about. It will be a slow process, slow as the evolution of the human spirit. The hope of it lies in this : that the best men everywhere, of every Church and denomination, are learning the same things, and by the teaching of facts are thinking along the same lines. They are coming together under the guidance of the same light. That light has already, under the workings of spiritual freedom, reached the leading Churches of Protestant Christendom. The effect of it is seen in the *rapprochements* which are the religious feature of to-day. And it will eventually reach the

Catholic world, and produce there its inevitable effect. But Catholicism will only have become fully Christian, will only have reached the first condition of union, when it has purged itself utterly of the lust of domination, of the pretensions, the falsities upon which its system of priestcraft has been erected. It will have to come down from its pride of the infallible teacher to that humbler place, where all the triumphs of science have been won, the place of the learner. Its officers will have to learn that their business is not that of ruling men's souls, but of helping and edifying. It will have to learn that God's truth is dispensed, not at the Vatican, but by that all-informing, all-enlightening Spirit who is working everywhere in the human consciousness, slowly correcting its errors, adding to its knowledge, enriching and strengthening its faculties.

That will be a long process, but it will come and is coming. Nothing can resist the steady maturing of the human mind. Till Catholicism has learned that lesson it will be left out of the great movement. The freer Churches of Christendom are already within reach of the great consummation. Those Churches will, by and by, present the spectacle of a nobler, healthier union than Christian history has ever before known. What will be its form? May we venture a prediction? It will, if we mistake not, be on the lines of that Anglo-Saxon fellowship in which this movement has taken its rise. England, her great ring of colonies, the sister State of America, what are they? Great free communities, each self-governing, each guarding zealously its own liberties, developing its own individuality, but united in one sentiment, full of profitable interchanges, of

gracious reciprocities, realising in the midst of diversity their essential oneness. So the Churches of Christ, rooted in their own history, cherishing their special traditions, exercising their special aptitudes, will dwell and work together; at home amid their own populations, and abroad in front of the heathen races, exhibiting the unity of one Spirit, that union of freedom and of love which is the hall-mark of Christ; that secret of Jesus, which is yet to win and redeem the world.

XXVII

THE UNSEEN BUILDERS

When you come first upon a great city you have borne in upon you the impression of man as, above all things, the builder. If he had done nothing else, you see him here as wonderful. In New York—in some ways his most colossal achievement—he has reared stone mountains. In those towering structures, which seem as though they would tear down the sky, he has surpassed the ancient Babel, surpassed it also in the confusion of tongues in the streets below. London holds you, not with its height, but with its vastness. As you traverse its leagues of surface, you have a feeling as of the ocean, of a human something that is shoreless, boundless, infinite. The city of cities, for a first view, is Constantinople, seen at least as we once saw it. As we moved up the Dardanelles in the early morning, everything was hidden by a dense mist. Then suddenly, as though a curtain had been drawn, the mist rolled away, and what a scene! To our left Europe, to our right Asia, the miles of shore on each side lined with palaces, glorious creations of dazzling white, some of them centuries old; but in that clear, smokeless air, looking as though they had been built yesterday. No wonder men have fought for Constantinople, the place of incomparable situation, commanding at once two seas and two continents.

Every great city, in what it offers to the eye, in what its buildings say, has its own soul, its own character. You feel that in Paris, in Vienna ; you feel it intensely in Rome.

But as you traverse Broadway, or climb the Palatine, or walk up Ludgate-hill, another thought will sometimes come. Amid all these miles of stone that smite the senses, amid all this roar of traffic, this bewildering movement, there comes a sense of that other world around you, all silent, with no sign of its presence, yet all so real, so intense, so unutterably mighty—the world of the city's thought. These buildings themselves are all thoughts, gone into form and structure, the thoughts of men dead, many of them long ago, but living here, incorporate in wood and stone. St. Paul's is firstly and lastly an idea, so is St. Sophia, so is New York's Metropolitan Tower. But these buildings are not the main thing. The city itself, these hurrying crowds, each man full of his affairs—what a realm is here, a realm without statistics, without any instruments that can gauge its quality, its proportions ; a realm which contains all of good and evil ; a realm that holds all the possibilities of to-day, and of the endless to-morrows ! It is here that—in the deepest, the one true sense—we meet with man the builder. Each one of these myriads is a creator, hard at work at this moment creating himself, creating his neighbour, creating his world. Here is the real city, its maker, its soul—the crowd, the bodily visible crowd—and filling it, flowing through it, that silent river of thought. Let us stand by its shore a little and look at its depths. It is a realm populous with wonders, where lie all life's mysteries and also all its lessons.

This thought-world, unseen, like the air or the ether, is enclosed mainly, by no means entirely, in these moving bodies of men. It is in them, but not of them. You can never, by any process, extract one from the other. The brain is an organ of mind, just as a piano is an organ of music. But the brain's white and grey matter is no more mind than the piano strings are a Beethoven sonata. Tyndall, whose conception of the possibilities of matter led some misguided people to hail him as a materialist, knew too well its limitations. He comes back to the confession: "The passage from the physics of the brain to the corresponding facts of consciousness is inconceivable as the result of mechanism." And this farther: "The problem of the connection of body and soul is as insoluble in its modern form as it was in the prescientific ages." The mind seems to come into the body at birth, to grow with it, to mature with it, to decline, decay and die with it. Lucretius, far back in the old world, founded an argument for materialism on this seeming correspondence. To-day we see a little farther than Lucretius, a little farther into the meaning of what we call life and death. The body's death is no death; it is only a change. Its substance is immortal, not one atom of it destructible. And no fact emerges which tells us that mind-stuff—whatever it is—has any less lastingness. There is so much simulated death, death which suddenly starts back into life. Has it ever occurred to you the queer thing that happens when you open a book? It was written, perhaps, centuries ago. All that while back a man put his thoughts there. The man himself, as a bodily presence, vanished, so long ago. You turn

the page, bring your thought to those dead curves and strokes of printer's ink, and lo ! the dead man's thought leaps up at you, alive, arguing, persuading, convincing, or perhaps amusing, or annoying you. Here is a soul still talking, the soul of a Shakespeare or of a Cagliostro, of a Voltaire or of a St. Paul. You can never get rid of bodies, finally ; no, nor can you get rid of souls. Your visible is immortal, and your invisible is immortal. Both life and death are forms of the same thing—they are of the stuff of eternity.

Man is, for us, the highest organised expression of thought. His body matter, and especially his brain matter, contain more of it than anything else we see. But the outside world also is full of it, as full of it as it can hold. A stone is congested thought. Its weight, its colour, its cohesion, all its qualities, are really, when you come to think of it, mental things. They can have no reality apart from a mind —yours or someone else's—that knows them as qualities, and deals with them as such. When you come higher, to a flower, a bird, you have mind visible moving towards self-expression, beginning to know itself. Is not Schelling right in his philosophy of nature, where he exhibits her, in all her processes, as an intelligence struggling towards consciousness, towards personality ? The truth is we are in a world crammed with soul, alert with deathless mind. The vase on your table has in it the soul of the artist who fashioned it, and behind that, in the very substance of which it is made you are peering into a mind vaster than human.

But we started this theme with the excellent intention of being entirely practical, and we are

wandering off into every kind of speculation. Let us quit that and get to the things we want most of all to say. The thing that holds us, as we watch the surging city crowd, is that every single member of it is a builder. He is building himself. Inside each passing figure is a something at work—invisible, no one of its parts ever showing to mortal eye, a something not to be described by any physical analogy, something we call now the thought, now the feeling, now the will—and this complex immaterial something is at every moment creating, building. Building what? You may say, for one thing, it is building the outside world. Certainly it is doing that. The whole outside world is simply the clothing of ideas. Cathedrals, gaols, armies, fleets, railways, are just thoughts projected outwards, housing themselves in these visible things. As men's thoughts grow the world will grow. Ever as the thought becomes clearer, wider, bolder, will the world become a bigger, bolder, more beautiful world. But that outside world is not, after all, the main thing. The chief matter is that the man, inwardly, is building himself. In the religious books of ancient Persia we have a striking picture of what happens to a good man after death. In his journey beyond the river he meets a radiant figure, glowing with ethereal beauty. Fascinated, he asks its name. Smilingly the figure replies: "I am your true, your best self; I am the sum of your ideals, of your best thoughts, of your struggles for the good, of your strong resolves. I am you; you are I; we join now together in the glorious harmony of the celestial life."

A wonderful enough picture this, from that far-off age. It is a parable, of course, sprung from the

imagination of the vivid East. But let us not miss its central truth. This is, that of all possible structures this hidden one, of our own character, our final being, is the chief, meant to be the finest, the most lasting. We are building it day by day. And it is here that Christianity strikes its most insistent note. For it is above all things a religion of the innermost thought. The present writer, discussing once the religious question with a travelled fellow-countryman whom he met on the Continent, found, to his astonishment, that this very thing, the control of the thoughts, was, to his companion, the leading objection against Christianity. "An impossible religion," he exclaimed, "which presumes to tell you not only what you are to do, but what you are to think!" It reminded one of Lord Melbourne, after listening to a searching sermon: "I have always been a consistent defender of Church and State, but I am not going to stand a religion which proposes an inquisition on one's private life." It is the very complaint of Cæcilius against the early Christians: "What monstrous, what portentous notions do they fabricate! That that God of theirs, whom they can neither show nor see, should be inquiring diligently into the characters, the acts, nay, the very words and secret thoughts of all men!" Surely there was never a funnier objection. For if religion does not live there, in our inmost thought; if it does not habitually work there, it lives and works nowhere. Do we not see that our thought is everything, our whole being? When we have got our thought right, everything is right; when that is wrong, everything is wrong. We know how true that is about a bridge. If the thought in it

is wrong we do not want to cross that bridge. And what is true of the bridge is true of all the rest. To cleanse our thought-world of all the vasty wrongness that gets into it; to cleanse it of envy, jealousy, pride, despondency; to get our thought resolutely into the right habits, into the right way of regarding ourselves, our world, our neighbour, our duty; to habituate it to lovingness, to nobleness, to self-sacrifice, to all that approves itself as the best, what else is it that we are in this world for, what else than this is success, and what else can make life worth living? More than that, when we are on this road, and following it diligently, what seeming misfortunes, what hardships, what endurances can take from us the consciousness of inner blessedness, the feeling that it is good to be here?

And this silent, potent working on ourselves means a silent, hardly less potent working on others. We are building their structure also. And this, if we fairly grasp it, becomes one of life's finest features, one of its surest avenues into happiness. The builder anywhere, if he is good for anything, enjoys himself. His work-area, to outsiders, may seem a confused, desolate affair. It is a collection of imperfections, of rubbish-heaps, of half-finished things. He, with his plan in his head, with the results that are coming, sees otherwise, and comes to his task with joyous heart. And we are all builders, if we knew it. Wives with their husbands, parents with their children, teachers with their pupils, ourselves in relation to all the social intimacies, we are there in a set of unfinished structures. How are we taking them? It is fatally easy to take them the wrong way. What is the meaning of passing judgment

on people? Why are we, on the highest authority, warned off from it? Because that is to make the tremendous mistake of regarding them as finished structures, with nothing left for us but to appraise, and, as the almost assured consequence—to condemn. And so, in a thousand homes, criticisms, dissensions, quarrels, despairs. And all this such waste of force, such waste of happiness! Whereas, if instead of standing as critics amid the mortar heaps, bewailing their ugliness, we took ourselves as builders, eager for construction, would there not be a difference?

These evolving characters, with all their roughness of outline, their uncomeliness of feature, what if you take them as your builder's sites, where noble structures may be reared? The sheer difference of attitude is immense. Where the critic is all dissatisfaction, the builder is all enthusiasm. Only, for heaven's sake, take care how you do the building! It is so rarely by words. Save us from the people who pose as examples, who on every occasion deliver their little moral lectures, their Pecksniffian maxims, who talk from their own height of virtue down to the inferiors they patronise! These are no builders. They lack that first principle of moral architecture, the knowledge of themselves. The work we are thinking of is hardly an affair of words at all; certainly not of lecture words. It is a work of insight and of sympathy; of faith in our brother and of the attitude towards him which faith begets. We see in him, behind all his faults, the possible structure, and the materials for it that lie in him. And with these materials we deal, letting all others severely alone. We perceive his own daily inner struggle, of his good with his evil, and we put all our strength

into his fight. Does his evil, his passion, his temper overflow upon us? Shall we reinforce that bad side of him by adding fuel to the flame? The essence of a quarrel is that each is meeting the other's evil by his own evil. Here are two bads uniting for a common defeat of the good. At such moments the thing is, not to talk, least of all to talk back, but to dive down to the depths of our being, down to our innermost reserves of faith, hope and love. There, where in silent wrestling we have won the victory over ourselves, we have won it for our brother. For wrath cannot contend for ever against love. A soul of that temper in a household, in a workroom, yes, in a senate, in a world, is accomplishing the finest artistry, is rearing structures with which no Parthenons or Taj Mahals can compare. They are spiritual buildings with heaven's own beauty, its own eternity upon them, palaces to adorn the City of God.

Everything, in the long run, comes back upon this inner building. Says Carlyle: "The spiritual everywhere originates the practical, models it, makes it; so that the saddest external condition of affairs among men is but evidence of a still sadder internal one." When will the world find common sense enough to see that? All the external uglinesses of our national life; its city slums, its prisons, its hideous warships, its embattled armies; all the scowls on human faces; all the slouching, decrepit, rag-clad human forms, are the outcome, the material expression of a primal inward ugliness. And every improvement here begins from within. As our souls grow cleaner, so all our bodies, so all our streets. As the soul reaches towards beauty, our architecture

will grow beautiful; a new beauty will come to our countryside. Man cannot get away from his spiritual destiny. His whole problem is spiritual. The New Testament doctrine of heaven and hell means finally this, that inner beauty makes outward beauty, that inner ugliness makes outward ugliness. But heaven is going to conquer hell. If we took our world to-day as a finished business we all ought to be pessimists. But so long as we are builders we shall never be pessimists. When we see what can be done, is being done, in ourselves, we are full of hope for the world. The mere scientific thought of the last half century has transformed the earth, and we are going to have still better thoughts. Science is, after all, the mere surface of the soul. It handles matter and force, but humanity means something deeper. As, in its incessant probing, it reaches towards the centre, it will discover that cleverness is not comparable with holiness; that matter and force are ever misused except as the instruments of purity and love. To these humanity will finally go as the quarries for its building. From these stores of inner beauty will come our New Jerusalem, our new earth and heaven.

XXVIII

THE SUCCESSOR

We dismiss the old year and hail the new. *Le roi est mort; vive le roi!* There is a clanging of midnight bells; in the streets the roar of excited crowds. In various fashions, from the solemn to the grotesque, the world speeds the parting, hails the coming guest. The old year is played out. It has no secrets for us. We can tell its fortunes better than could Old Moore; for we know them. Its successor, the new one, brings with it the fascination of the unknown. Its page is all to be written; its wealth of life all to be unfolded. Succession, the passing of one thing into another, is the most constant of facts; the one thing ever before our eyes, and yet the one thing which is beyond the reach of the human intellect to understand. Have you ever tried to penetrate the mystery of becoming; to see what is really contained in it? It seems a combination of impossibles. It is at once a being and a not being; a moment when the thing is not and a moment when it is; and yet by what process of rational thought, by what canon of sane reasoning, can you deduce a something from a nothing? Thus is it that nature's cunning mocks us; that her seeming simplest things, displayed without disguise every day before us, leave our understanding bewildered, beggared.

Succession is, we say, in this sense, a mystery, but it is a mystery that is ever with us. There is no interlude, no half-time called in the game. It is almost terrifying, this never-ending movement. One is inclined at times to scream out a protest; to beseech the universe to take a rest. No use. It is the everlasting flux, and we are in it, a part of it. The same law which sends the earth swinging ceaselessly on its orbit keeps your blood circulating, creates in you the new cell and discharges the old one; sends you from each moment to the next and towards the final one. The actual is pressed hard by the potential; pressed till it is dislodged by it. The one permanent thing seems to be the law of eternal change.

Every single thing has, waiting for it, its successor; and every single person. It is well for all of us to take note of that fact, and to accommodate ourselves to it. An old man should have learned better by this time than to begrudge the young. Yet the heir is apt to be an unpopular person; at times he has sinister glances bestowed on him. He is too constant a reminder of what is coming! Age yields its prerogatives hardly. Brienne tells of Cardinal Mazarin that he saw him, in his last days, tottering in a gallery of his splendid palace, looking round on its treasures, and heard him mutter, "*Il faut quitter tout cela!*" And yet it is a beneficent law this, which brings to an end the tenure of the old. Martineau, in a noble passage, written in his own old age, shows how evil for the world would be the unduly prolonged continuance of one generation. It would mean the continued dominance of one set of ideas; would check and hamper the development of the younger minds and activities; would become a

tyranny fatal to progress. In any case it is better to accept cheerfully the world's order, to accept it as a sound one. Is it, indeed, any use kicking against it, when the only result will be the bruising of our own shins ?

The law of succession, as we trace it back through the ages, seems too subtle for our comprehension. It baffles us with its inconsistencies. Viewing it from one aspect we are astonished at its conservatism, at the fidelity with which the old is reproduced in the new. "*Plus ça change,*" says the French proverb, "*plus c'est la même chose.*" The latest fashion, whether of customs or of thoughts, if we look a second time, reveals itself as an old acquaintance. A moderate acquaintance with the Greek Fathers would enable you to reproduce from them almost every modern Church heresy. Our Christmas customs, Yule logs, holly, feastings, singings, mummings, go back thousands of years before A.D. 1. Newman, in his essay on "Development," showed how nearly every Catholic custom and ceremony had its counterpart in pagan times. The stream of tradition as it rolls along leaves its deposit deep on the souls of men. Where everything in the way of ideas seems to have been revolutionised, down beneath, in the realm of feeling, the old has left its mark. Its action is well represented by the remark attributed to Fontenelle : "I do not believe in ghosts, but I am afraid of them." We can never get rid of the past if we want to. Our ancestors live in us and work in us, most of all when we least realise the fact.

So much for the conservatism in succession. But take now the other side. Before we reach the

human story, in evolution's humblest forms, we are met with a staggering radicalism. In animal and plant life Darwin taught us how evolution proceeds by the development of varieties. Nature has her own slow and roundabout way of developing them; man can enormously help the process by artificial means. But neither Darwin nor any of his successors has been able to tell us how the variation came in the first place. It is the greatest question to-day in biology. It is the standing miracle, and not the less so in the smaller variations which escape the common eye than in those vast apparent leaps in which nature seems to have crossed all the boundary lines; when she passed from the inorganic to the organic, from matter to life, from animal to man. It is when we watch her daring in these directions that we find it less difficult to believe in that great leap of history, the birth of Jesus of Galilee; that birth where man, after reaching the human, starts afresh on his path to the Divine.

There is a law of succession in the thought world as much as in the outer world. And the outer changes with the change in the inner. Could you compare, on any standard of comparison, the universe in which a Bergson or a Eucken lives, with that in which an African savage lives? And this evolution of ideas is as inevitable, one may say as pre-ordained, as the evolution of plants and animals. The succession here has reached the deepest things. Have we quite realised the change which the ages have brought into our idea of God? Could we act now as Cromwell and his Ironsides acted when he shut up some of the papist Irish and burned them in the church at Drogheda, believing he was acting under

a divine commission, a commission like that of the prophet when he " hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord " ? Do we accept now the logic of Queen Mary when she burned heretics, declaring she was only doing what God would do to them in hell ? That is no longer the God we worship. The spiritual movement has gone past that stage, and will never return to it.

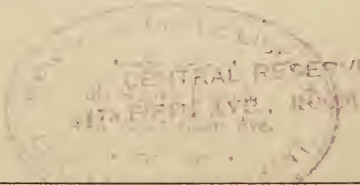
The successor ; how it crowds in upon us at every point, sometimes in a very awful way ! In our personal doings, for instance. We can will the thing we are going to do ; we cannot will the thing that follows. That is out of our hands ; it will work on us henceforth according to the iron law of consequence. Men make their decisions so often in the spirit of M. Ollivier, the French Minister, when he entered on the war with Germany " with a light heart." As he found, there is no lightness in what follows. And yet even here, in these grim chains of sequence, there is a freedom and room for the soul to move. We are never, at any moment of our lives, the victims of a mere necessity. Upon each event, as it follows, our personality can play. We can create it, as it were, after our own image. Let the image be a pure one, illumined, strengthened by faith and love, and it shall be, amid the crude elements of the outward, as the philosopher's stone, which turns the iron into gold.

What is coming in the immediate succession of the years ? Many sincere men take a pessimistic view. They foresee a slump in religion and morals as inevitable as the slump in trade, and perhaps, with a less chance of recovery. Certainly the times are difficult and some of the omens menacing. What, for instance, are our youth thinking about ? We look

into the eyes of so many to find there no reflex of "the vision splendid." Are materialism and scepticism, the struggle for existence, the lust of luxury and pleasure, to bring us, if we are not there already, to the decadent Roman world which Arnold pictures?

> On that hard pagan world disgust
> And secret loathing fell,
> Deep weariness and sated lust
> Made human life a hell.

That picture is Rembrandtesque in its darkness, but it has also, after Rembrandt, its wonderful light effect. It shows us the pit, but also the way out. Is it not certain that man never lives on sated lust, that nought but deadly weariness and a sense of hell must follow these courses? And if we have multitudes who to-day follow them, there is, we believe, a growing host, on the other hand, of varied creeds but of one belief, the belief in goodness, in what it consists, in what its successors are, and its consummation. The community may be sick, but we know the laws of health, and we know that the health is possible. Let us be sure of this, the world, in the next or in any following year, is never going to lose its best. It is going to get more of it. And for you and me to-day there is no best better than to link ourselves with renewed fealty to that cause. Empires may dissolve and fall around us. We go on building the City of God.



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